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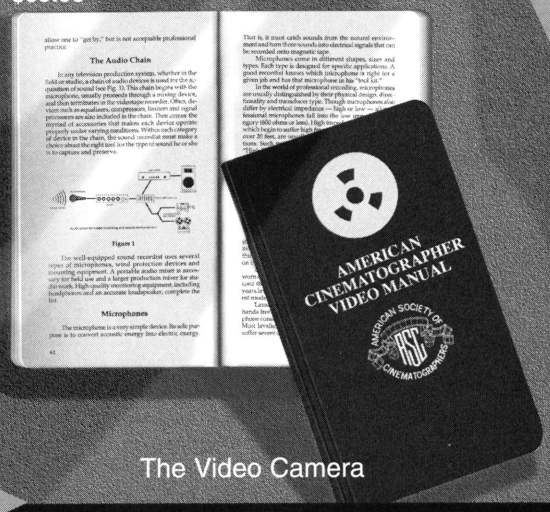

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February 1995 Vol. 76 No. 2

American Cinematographer

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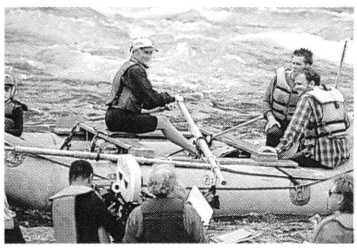

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On the Cover:
Fiona Conneelly (Jeni Courtney) wanders through her family's abandoned homestead on Seal Island in a scene from *The Secret of Roan Inish* (photo by David Appleby).

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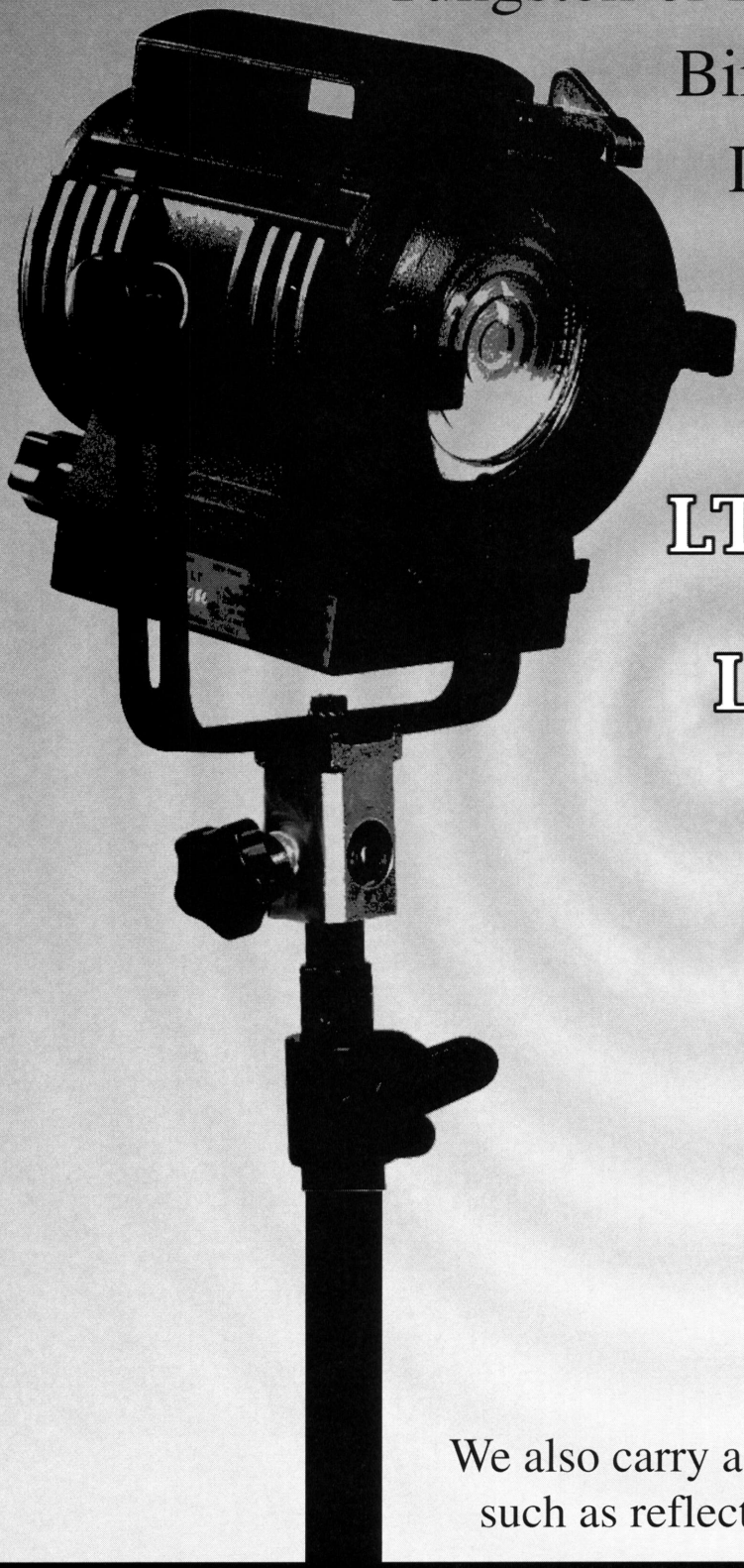

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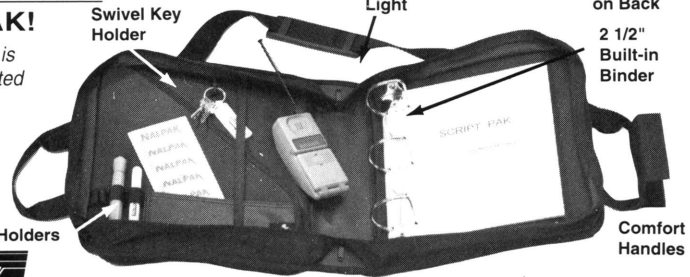

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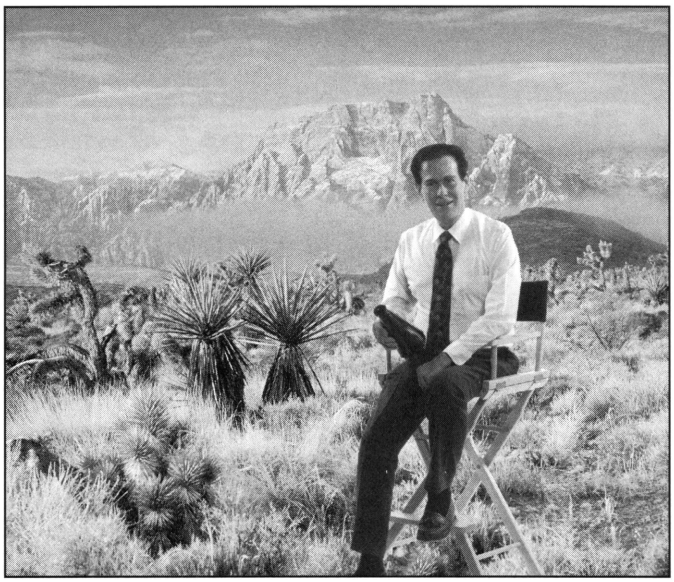

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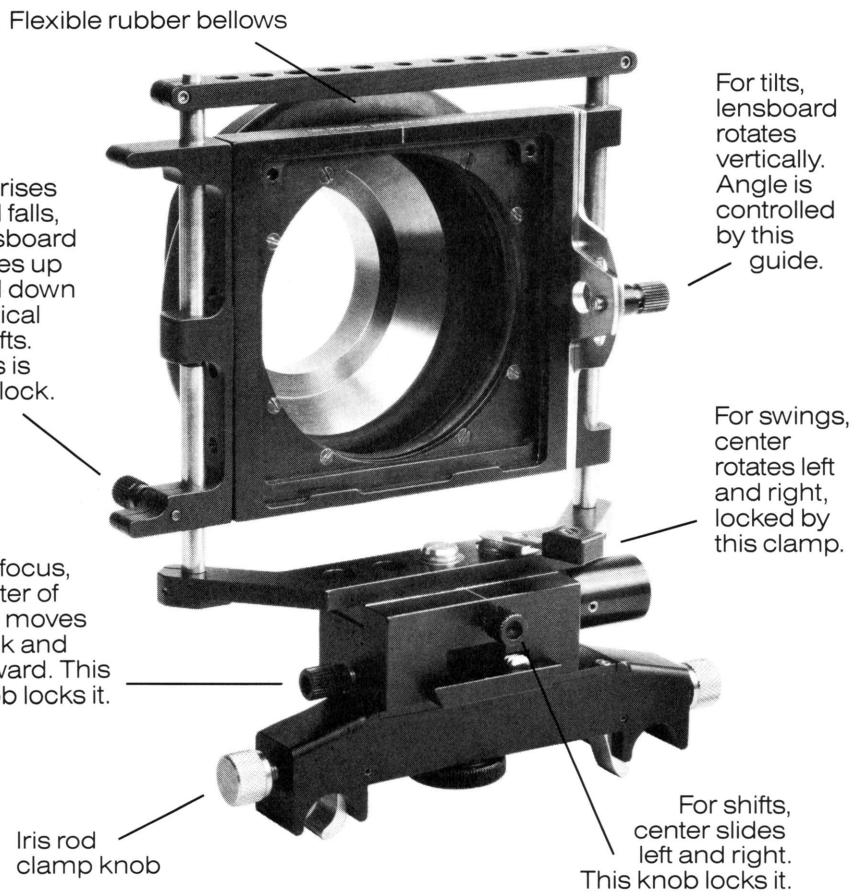
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Iris rod clamp knob
For shifts, center slides left and right. This knob locks it.

The view camera has employed bellows, swings, tilts, rises, falls and shifts for about a hundred and thirty years.

Shoot head-on into mirrors

Now our BLs and Type 3s can use them, too. You can make an egg spherical and make a billiard ball egg-shaped. You can shoot directly head-on into mirrors and not see yourself. Or remove a foreground telephone pole without changing your angle of view.

Almost infinite depth of field

In Ansel Adams' famous still photograph of Mount Williamson, the mountain range is on the horizon, about a mile away. In front of it, the ground is strewn with boulders, the nearest one three or four feet away. By tilting his lens down, Adams changed the plane of sharp focus from vertical to more nearly parallel with the field of boulders. *Everything is in focus.*

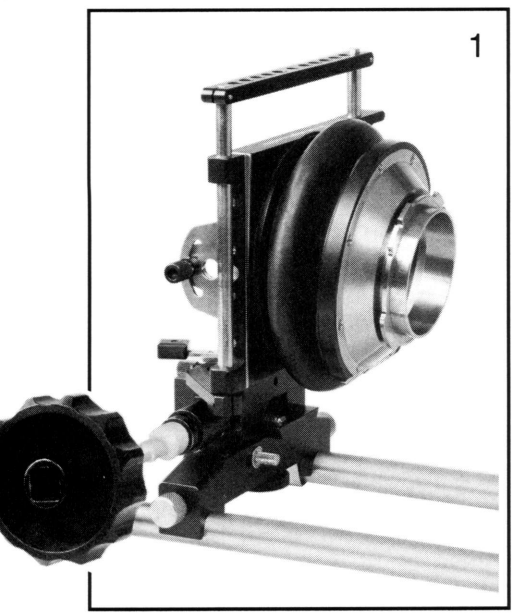
No need to stop way down

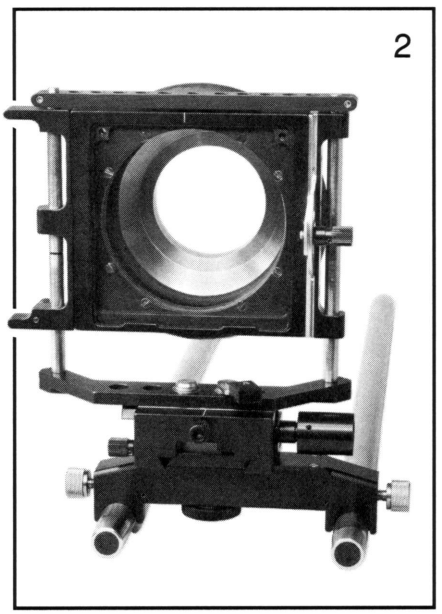
Shooting from one side at a 45° angle, you compose a two-shot of a car's driver (near you) and the front-seat passenger (further away). By swinging your lens to the right (to the left in Britain), you can easily hold focus on both people because the plane of sharpness then runs along the front of both faces.

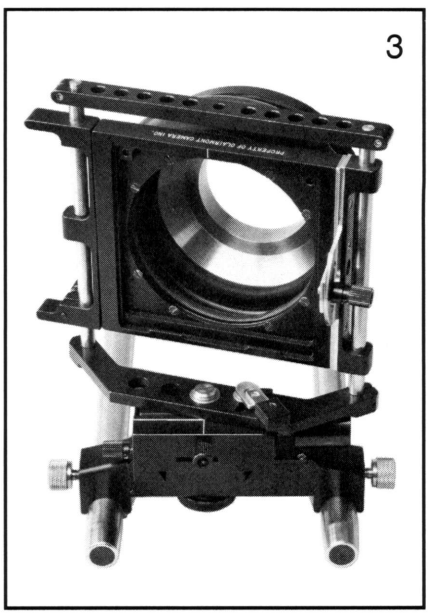
The Swing/Shift is a PL mount system designed and built by Clairmont Camera.

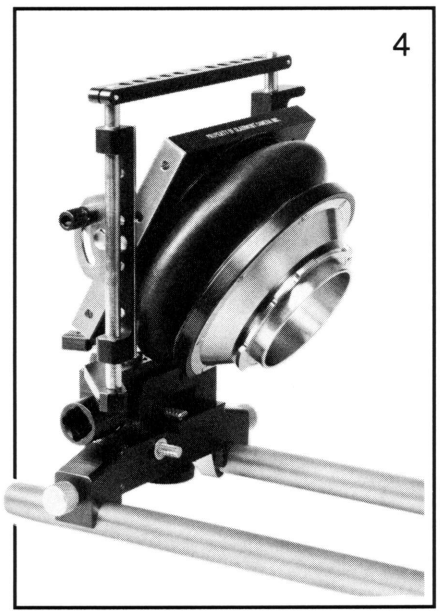
Controlling focus and shape

The rule is: Tilting/swinging the lens plane alters the *focus;* tilting/swinging the film plane alters the *shape.* With the car two-shot, you swing the lens but you *don't* move the camera body (film









1. Lensboard/front in lowest (Fall) position. Note remote focus. Unit is mounted on iris rods. 2. Lensboard/front at far right (Shift) and at highest (Rise) position. Rises and Falls are vertical Shifts, of course. 3. Lensboard/front in far right Swing position. 4. Lensboard/front in extreme upwards Tilt position. Swings and Tilts can be combined.

plane). If you tilt the camera body up at a skyscraper, you're tilting the film plane. The skyscraper's shape will be altered – its sides will converge.

Perspective and position control

To keep the sides of skyscrapers and cereal boxes parallel, you have to keep the camera body level. If you'd like to see less foreground (at the bottom) or more skyscraper (at the top), you can shift the image down in the frame by moving the lens laterally up. To suit your composition, you can shift the cereal box up or down or to either side within the frame – while keeping the sides parallel and without altering your angle of view.

Close focus for tabletop

The Clairmont Swing/Shift has built-in rack and pinion focussing. You can change focus during a shot without anything touching the lens. The bellows extends, of course, so you can focus down to a few inches. We're adding lenses to the range, including some that are designed for close work.

Photographer impressed

Paul Gaffney is a First Assistant in New York. He has worked, as a still photographer, with view cameras. He used our Swing/Shift on a recent TV commercial shoot. "I was impressed with the *amount* of swing and shift available," he says. "This is a giant step backwards in the right direction."

Lenses for the Swing/Shift:

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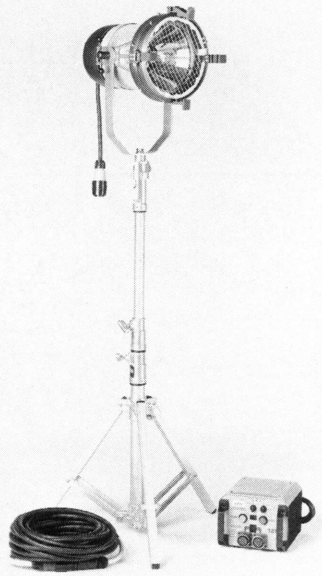

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Letters

NYPD Clarification

In the November issue of *AC*, an article appeared featuring Brian Reynolds and the shooting of *Guarding Tess*. A postscript to the article inferred that Mr. Reynolds had also created the concept and cinematic grammar of the TV show *NYPD Blue*, in essence giving him credit for the new and exciting palette of the series. The truth is, Mr. Reynolds had nothing to do with any aspect of the initial cinematic concept or execution, which earned the series praise and recognition as a breakthrough show when it aired on TV.

History affirms that the PILOT and subsequent EIGHT episodes of the series were the sole cinematic inspiration of Bing Sokolsky, in collaboration with Gregory Hoblit, the director. In recognition of this imaginative vision, Mr. Sokolsky was nominated for two ASC awards, one for the *NYPD Blue* pilot and the other for one of the subsequent episodes. This is only the second time in ASC history that this has occurred.

My purpose in writing this letter is to give credit where credit is due, not to discredit Mr. Reynolds, who is a fine cameraman in his own right. I am sure Mr. Reynolds does not want recognition for a concept that is not his. I know it's tough to have to follow a format created by someone else, and we all have had a taste of that unpleasant business.

The brotherhood has always looked to *AC* as the respected chronicler of the world of cinematography. We all look forward with great pleasure to the monthly articles about how the great classic films were made by master cameramen. It would certainly be a disservice to all of us if the magazine distorted the history of this cinematic event.

I have been moved to write this letter not only because Mr. Bing Sokolsky is my son, but also on behalf of all of us who live in this era of media hype and manipulation. We as cinematographers cannot afford to lose faith in the forum of excellence *AC* has offered us for over 75 years.

— Melvin Sokolsky
Sokolsky Films
Beverly Hills

The paragraph in question reads as follows:

"Postscript: Soon after completing *Guarding Tess*, Reynolds was reunited with Bochco on *N.Y.P.D. Blue*, the avant-garde TV series which is redefining both the look and pace of visual storytelling on television. It has already earned Reynolds an ASC Outstanding Achievement Award nomination. He earned a similar nomination two years ago for *Civil Wars*. Reynolds is exploring some new visual frontiers on *N.Y.P.D. Blue*, but that's another story."

Sokolsky's ASC Award nominations were covered in AC *May 1994.*

— Editor

Mixing Old and New Footage

Re: Richard J. Schmidt's historical article on *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves* (*AC* October and November): In 1965 Universal "remade" the film as *The Sword of Ali Baba*, with Virgil Vogel directing new footage designed around highlights from the old film and Peter Mann, Jocelyn Lane, Gavin McLeod, and Greg Morris taking the roles originally played by Jon Hall, Maria Montez, Kurt Katch, and Turhan Bey, who were often quite visible in the long shots from the old film. At one curious point there is a cut from a long shot in which Bey is clearly visible to a closer angle of Morris in a similar costume! Frank Puglia is credited with playing the same role but, not having seen the film since its original release, I don't remember if there was any new footage with him or if his role was entirely from the old film, in which instance this interplaying between old and new footage would predate both the mirage sequence in *The Last Remake*

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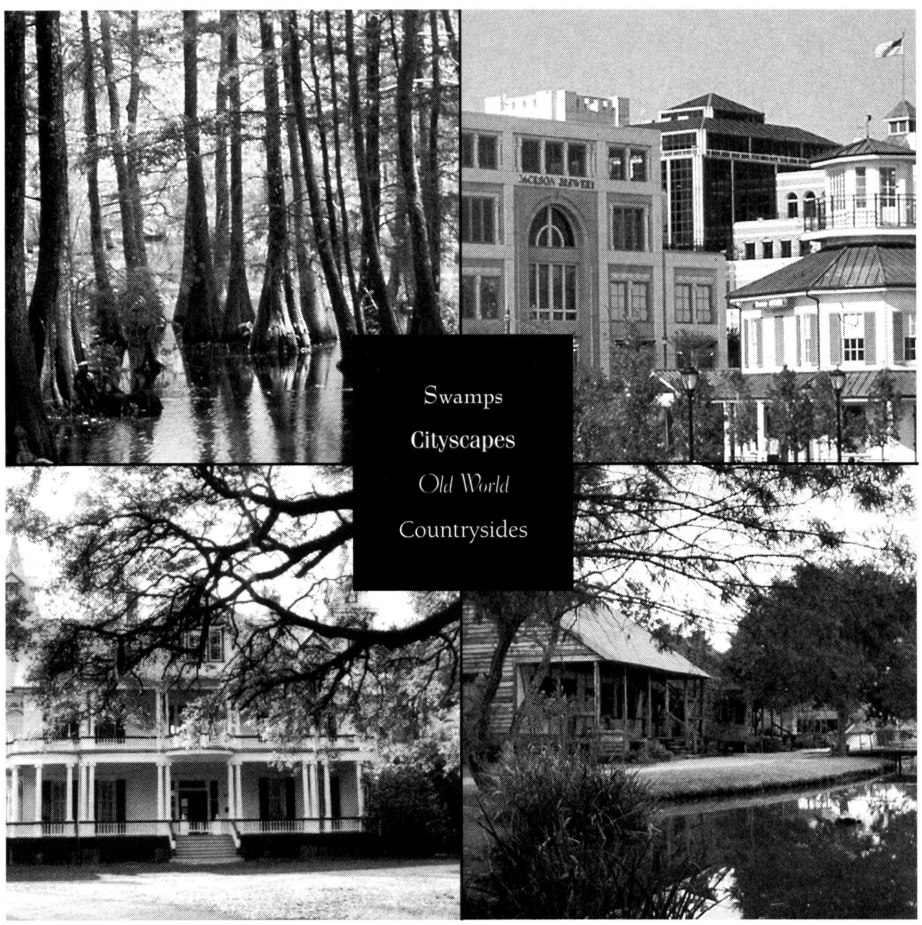

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of Beau Geste (1977) and its highly touted use in *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982).

William Margulies, ASC had the unenviable task of trying to match George Robinson's original work, and although the release prints were made by Technicolor's IB process, the negative stock and lab technologies of the time did not really allow for the seamless mixing of original Eastman Color negative footage with that from an internegative made from separation masters; the latter tended to print a brownish cast.

Universal repeated this experiment later with *The King's Pirate* (1967); a remake of *Against All Flags* (1951); and *Raid on Rommel* (1971), a reworking of *Tobruk* (1966) built around the latter film's stunt and effects footage and one of the last films directed by Henry Hathaway, who began his directing career in the Thirties doing low-budget sound remakes of Paramount's Zane Grey westerns, designed around action sequences from the silent versions.

— Rick Mitchell
Los Angeles

In Black & White

Re: Janusz Kaminski's work on Schindler's List *in June 1994's "Picture Perfect: 1993's Finest Cinematographers" by David Heuring and Stephen Pizzello ("The black & white stocks — which were invented a half-century ago . . . "):*

So black & white stock was "invented" 50 years ago — hmm, what was *The Squaw Man* or *Birth of a Nation* shot on? Better educate these boys.

— Lamar Bloodworth
Chicago

We were referring to the stocks Kaminski used on that movie, 5231 Plus X and 5222 Double X, which, according to Eastman Kodak, were introduced in 1956 and 1959, respectively.

— *Editor*

Errata

We'd like to apologize for misspelling Lance Leykam's name in our November article on *Guarding Tess.*

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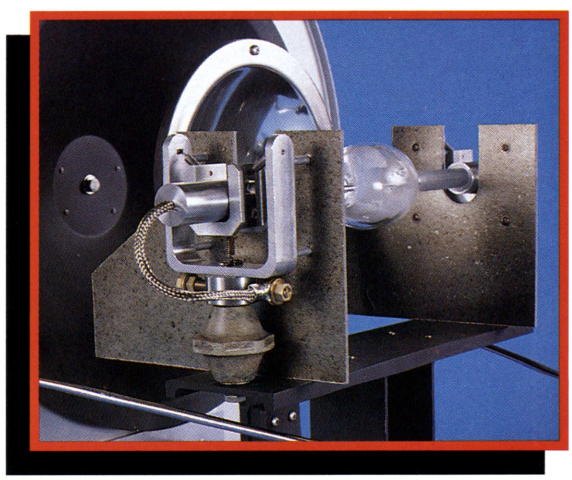

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Around the World's Film Commissions

compiled by Marji Rhea

Australia

The Australian Film Commission has launched its third edition of *Get the Picture,* a reference guide to the country's film, television and video industries. The guide notes developments over the past year in the audiovisual sector, gives findings from the last five annual production surveys, looks at the impact of new technologies and the emerging geological shift in demand on distribution strategies, examines critical and audience reception of Australian film, and lists industry information sources such as organizations and associations, publications and databases. Data included features federal film assistance and employment figures; production numbers and value; feature films, mini-series, series, serials, and telemovies; data on imports/exports, the cinema and video industries, and theatrical, TV and video releases; box-office figures; ratings; and awards.

Photo by Davis Turner

Fall colors in full splendor at Camp Hanes in King, North Carolina.

New to this edition is information on the number and value of Australian feature films from 1970-1979; balance-of-payment figures for film, TV and video royalties; employment data by state, gender, ethnic background and income; and film stock imports.

Creative Nation, the Federal government's new cultural policy statement, Creative Nation, has allocated $250 million to be committed to the Arts over the next four years, including a television production fund for drama, children's drama programs, and documentary programs; a Special Broadcasting Service Production Fund to commission high-quality Australian programs from independent producers; a focus on multimedia; and a new committee on Copyright Law Review to examine protection of copyright in the new communications environment. The government also announced that 20th Century-Fox will be establishing a $20 million film studio in Sydney.

In Queensland, which was the site of the entire shoot of last year's feature film *No Escape,* the Pacific Film and Television Commission hosted the productions of *Street Fighter,* ABC's MOW *Kansas,* the U.S. television series *Time Trax,* and the feature *Fortress II,* starring Christopher Lambert. Construction began on a new soundstage at the Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios, bringing the number of soundstages available for hire to six. The Commission is also hoping to lure to Queensland productions for small-screen adaptations of Robert Hughes' book *The Fatal Shore,* as well as the mini-series sequel to Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds.*

Film Victoria reports that Melbourne has hosted the production of *Hotel Sorrento,* a film adaptation of Australian Hannie Rayson's award-winning stage play. Also being filmed in Melbourne are the mini-series *The Feds* and *Halifax;* the documentaries *A Dominant Woman — My Jewish Mother* and *Rainbows in My Desert; Law of the Land Series 3,* a television series; and the feature film *Lucky Break.*

For information: Australian Film Commission, Sydney, (02) 321-6444. Pacific Film & Television Commission, Brisbane, (07) 224-4114. Film Victoria, Melbourne, (03) 651-4089.

Bahamas

The Bahamas Film Commission is using software to market its message to location scouts and producers. Available in both Mac- and IBM-compatible formats, the diskette, "The Official Guide to the Perfect Locations," offers information on facilities and services including accommodations, transportation, local production facilities, talent and crew resources, as well as a listing of the Bahamas' extensive film, television and commercial credits.

For information: (809) 326-0635, FAX (809) 328-0945.

California

All of five months old, the City of Big Bear Lake Film Office is eager to bring productions to this city in the San Bernardino National forest. The Big Bear Valley has been visited by *The Wonder Years, Days of Our Lives, Hart to Hart,*

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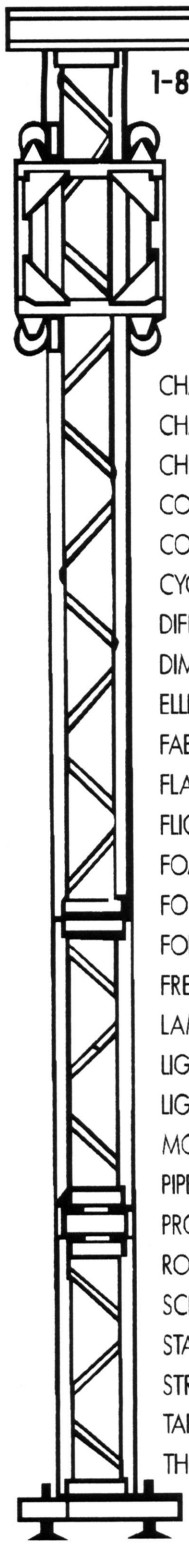

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Arnold Schwarzenegger's *Christmas in Connecticut,* and numerous commercials and ad campaigns. The city has over 300 days of sunshine per year and boasts pristine wilderness, winter snow, brilliant fall foliage and the an unrestricted public-access lake. The Valley is two hours from Los Angeles, easily accessible by air charter from any airport and home to many technical and talent professionals. The mountain offers more than 1,000 hotel rooms and hundreds of rental homes.

For information: City of Big Bear Lake Film Office, (909) 878-3040, FAX (909) 866-6766.

Florida

The Palm Beach County Film & Television Commission announces that Jonathan Krane, producer of the *Look Who's Talking* films, will be shooting four motion pictures in Palm Beach County. Burt Reynolds and Angie Dickinson wrapped up shooting *The Maddening* this summer, directed by Danny Huston and shot on various locations throughout Palm Beach and Martin counties. The area has also hosted CBS' *Rescue 911* and Robin Leach's *The Best of Modern Cuisine,* and is looking forward to working with the productions of the feature films *Underground Love* and *Just Cause* (with Sean Connery) and a Walt Disney project in Orlando.

Also news is that the Palm Beach County School Board has approved funding of about half a million dollars for the next two years for the establishment of a new Film and Television Technology Magnet Program at a local high school. Palm Beach Community College began admitting students to the Film & Television Program in January. That program will also be supported with film and television industry representatives and the Community College.

The Okaloosa Film Commission would like to call attention to its available locations and sites. The area, which has served as the backdrop for a Doug Stone music video, the movie *Grande Isle,* and Yamaha water vehicle spots, as well as scenes from *Jaws 2,* offers as locations the Crestview jail and Okaloosa County Jail, canopy roads, the historic Victorian small town of de Funiak, the largest military base around (Eglin), a rodeo, three airports (two public and one private), a Corvette club, and lots of hanging moss. The Commission has a list of local talent and technicians, as well as people willing to work non-union.

Florida has more than 40 local film offices, as well as two state film commission offices, one in Los Angeles at (818) 777-1613, and one recently moved from Jacksonville to Miami Beach at (904) 798-4300. The Palm Beach County Film Liaison office is at (407) 233-1000 and the Okaloosa Film Commission can be reached at (904) 651-7374, FAX (904) 651-7378.

Georgia

Georgia this year has seen the productions of *The War* with Kevin Costner, which debuted in Atlanta; the Civil War mini-series *Andersonville,* for which a huge POW camp was created in Senoia; the television movie *Past the Bleachers,* starring Richard Dean Anderson, which shot in Avondale Estates, Covington, Decatur and Conyers; and of course *Forrest Gump,* shot partially in Savannah. The state also said good-bye to the series *In the Heat of the Night,* which has filmed in Covington for seven seasons.

18 Emmy nominations this year went to Georgia-made movies, including *The Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All, To Dance with the White Dog,* and *I'll Fly Away: Then and Now.*

The Georgia Film & Videotape Office has also welcomed Warner Bros.' *Grace,* starring Julia Roberts, Dennis Quaid, and Robert Duvall and shooting in Savannah and Perry; and *Gas Light Addition,* starring Demi Moore and shooting in Savannah and Statesboro.

In January, the first online service with over 4,000 profiles dedicated to all disciplines of the creative community premiered in Atlanta. The Studio Backlot, an online service accessible with a Mac or PC, will broadly cover all of the creative disciplines and be very specific in its accessibility to the community. The Studio Backlot will allow users to communicate with the working community, access "real time" information on associations and current events, update listings in the Georgia Film & Videotape Sourcebook and Creative Index, obtain grant information, find out about the state's gallery, exhibit and festival openings, and learn about audition or production opportunities.

The software is free, along

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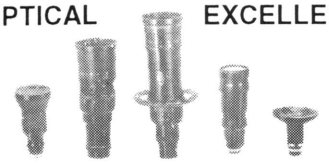

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with the first month on the service, and will be available through the Georgia Film and Videotape Office or Oz Publishing. Creative community members who have a listing in the upcoming 1995 Sourcebook or Creative Index 94/95 are already online.

For information: Georgia Film & Videotape Office, P.O. Box 1776, Atlanta, GA 30301-1776. For information about the 19th Atlanta Film and Video Festival, scheduled for June 9 to 17: (404) 352-4225.

Hawaii

The Hawaii Film Office is pleased to announce that *Chefs in Paradise,* a weekly series in which Hawaii's top culinary experts demonstrate their cuisine, has been picked up for syndication on the mainland and Japanese television. Hawaii has also recently welcomed the *Marker* television series starring Richard Grieco; *Under the Hula Moon,* a feature starring Stephen Baldwin and Emily Lloyd; the ubiquitous *Baywatch;* and *Outbreak,* starring Dustin Hoffmann and Morgan Freeman. Also in the news is the new SAG/AFTRA contract with Hawaii's advertising agencies, a three-year agreement for commercials produced and aired in Hawaii only.

Newly open to location filming is the Molokai Ranch on Molokai, an island rarely used by production crews until now. The privately-owned ranch has more than 53,000 acres of land on the island's west side and offers a wide range of scenic locations and settings, from lush tropical rainforests to pristine beaches, isolated sand dunes to rolling green meadows, majestic sea cliffs to a broad savannah. The ranch also has a Wildlife Conservation Park, which allows the opportunity to see and film up close a dozen types of exotic animals from Asia and Africa in a habitat mirroring their natural environment.

The ranch also offers a small-town atmosphere and laid-back pace that captures the authenticity of the culture, traditions, and lifestyle associated with the old Hawaii of the plantation era.

For information: Hawaii Film Office, (808) 586-2570, FAX (808) 586-2572.

Iowa

A slew of motion picture projects and commercial productions have visited Iowa this year, such as *The Bridges of Madison County,* starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood, and the seventh Iowa film of Italian director Pupi Avati, shot in Davenport. The suspense film *Mommy* was shot in Muscatine; *Smells Like Gin* in Fairfield; the series *The Road* and a Pepsi commerical in Cedar Rapids; and the final scene of the feature *The Puppet Masters* in Des Moines.

For information: Iowa Department of Economic Development, (515) 242-4805.

Kentucky

NHK, Japan's national television network, traveled to Kentucky this spring for the fourth segment in a series about American culture along the Mississippi River. The Kentucky segment featured Japanese bluegrass players visiting the state to work with bluegrass masters. NHK spent 21 days travelling to the International Bluegrass Association in Owensboro; Rosine, the home of bluegrass founder Bill Monroe; bluegrass music festivals in Louisville and Berea; and the Winchester workshop of musician/instrument maker Homer Ledford.

Kentucky has also been used for an Alan Jackson video, "Summertime Blues," in Land Between the Lakes in western Kentucky; background shots for 1995 Cadillac spots; *Sinkhole,* a Civil War drama that shot in Danville; *In the Name of Love,* a TV series filmed in northern Kentucky; and *Harry Crews: Guilty as Charged,* a documentary.

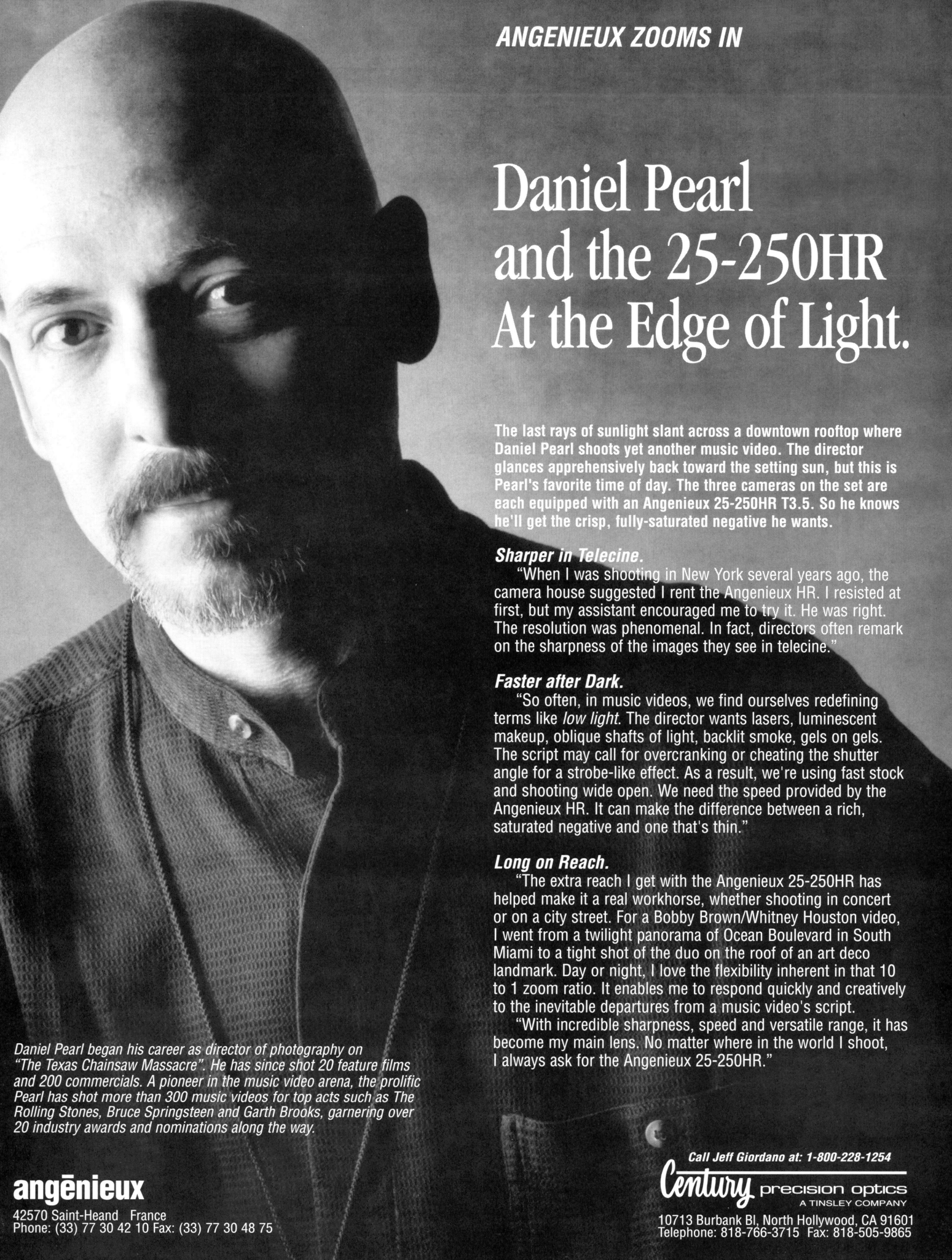
Night Ride, a short dramatic feature produced with a local cast and crew from Kentucky's Appalachian region, was screened with other short films at the Sundance Festival in 94. The film was also featured as a segment in the public television series *T.V. Families.*

Kentucky's new location guide is out, featuring Kentucky locations and information about filming in the state. It is available free by calling (800) 345-6591.

For information: Kentucky Film Office, (502) 564-3456.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Film Office and the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs have created the Boston Film Bureau, a new division of the Office of Cultural Affairs, which will feature a one-stop permitting office for filming permits at Boston City Hall. The MFO facilitates all



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Daniel Pearl and the 25-250HR At the Edge of Light.

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"When I was shooting in New York several years ago, the camera house suggested I rent the Angenieux HR. I resisted at first, but my assistant encouraged me to try it. He was right. The resolution was phenomenal. In fact, directors often remark on the sharpness of the images they see in telecine."

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Daniel Pearl began his career as director of photography on "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre". He has since shot 20 feature films and 200 commercials. A pioneer in the music video arena, the prolific Pearl has shot more than 300 music videos for top acts such as The Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen and Garth Brooks, garnering over 20 industry awards and nominations along the way.

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Nevada

Las Vegas has had a busy year: *Bodily Harm,* starring Daniel Baldwin and Linda Fiorentino, wrapped in June; *Star Trek: Generations* filmed a week's worth of locations at the Valley of Fire; *Texas Payback* filmed in and around town; *Blood of Youth* completed filming at various locations; and NBC's *Saved by the Bell: The Wedding Movie,* and a German mini-series, *California Quartet,* filmed at the Stardust Hotel/Casino. Michael Martin Murphy shot a music video in Virginia City, and the feature film *Cobb* was shot near Cave Rock, Lake Tahoe, Carson City.

After the Game, a murder mystery, came to Elko in the fall to shoot; while passing by the Commercial Casino, director Brewster MacWilliams was so taken with its polar bear decor that he decided to film there.

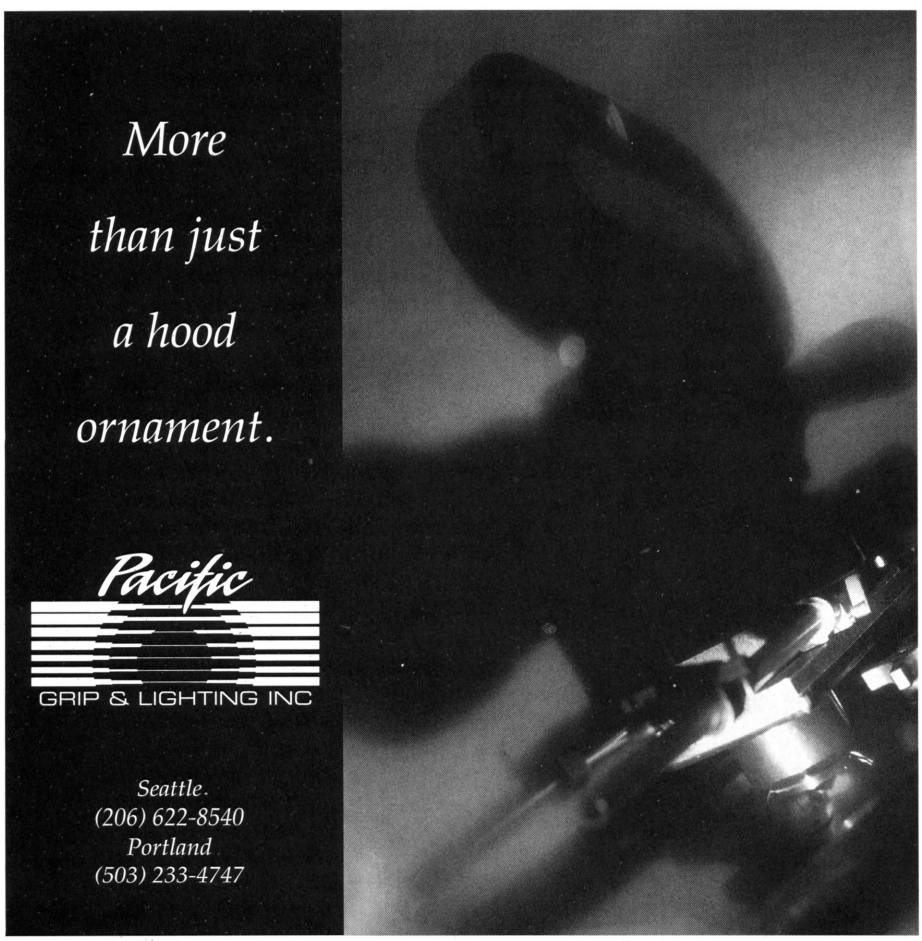
Martin Scorsese's *Casino,* starring Robert De Niro and Sharon Stone, shot in more than 70 sites around the city, with the Riviera serving as the title location. Another big-scale project, Carolco's *Showgirls,* has some of the same Vegas shooting dates as *Casino,* plus some time at Lake Tahoe. *Tenderfoots* shot in the Sierras, as did *Bonanza: The Ghosts.*

For information: Nevada Commission on Economic Development, Motion Picture Division, (702) 486-7282, FAX (702) 486-7284.

New Mexico

The New Mexico Film Office as of August had tracked a total of 93 projects for the year, including features, commercials, documentaries, music videos, television segments, educational programs, corporate videos and interactive games. The epic *Wyatt Earp* was a major visitor, along with several smaller project such as *The Legend of O.B. Taggert, The Cowboy Way, The Desperate Trail, Speechless, Homage* and *The Fight Before Christmas.*

Two New Mexico companies, American Laser Games of Albuquerque and InterMagic of Santa Fe, use actors and sets as an integral part of their interactive video games and have for the past several years been regularly using New



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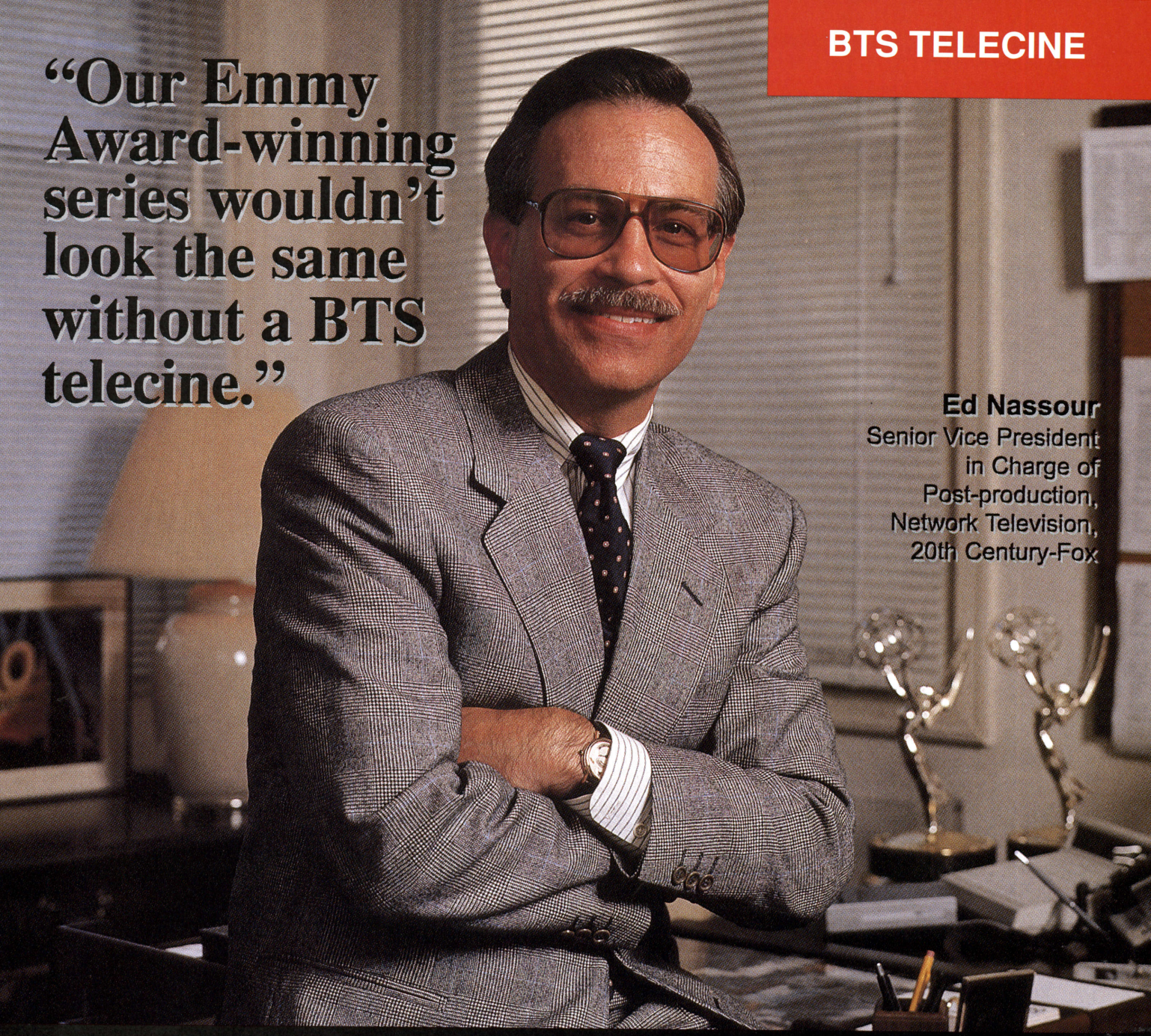

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"If we had transferred it in the traditional way, it would have been grainy and lacking sharpness. This would have been evident to everyone.

"It's that level of trust that also put 'Chicago Hope' on a BTS telecine.

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Mexico locations to film. American Laser Games, which started out by producing a live-action video training system to train police responses in high-drama situations and utilized the system to bring filmed-action games to arcades in 1990 with the hit game *Mad Dog McCree,* have produced a total of ten live-action games, from Old West shootouts to futuristic science-fiction adventures, filming most of them on location in New Mexico and part of Arizona. InterMagic produced the *Who Killed . . .* series of CD-ROMS, where the player acts as a detective charged with solving the case. InterMagic films witness interviews in a Santa Fe studio and does still shots of the crime scenes on location in places like Charlottesville and Martha's Vineyard.

For information: New Mexico Film Office, (505) 827-0300, FAX (505) 827-0407.

North Carolina

Filming for *The Other Anna,* an ABC TV movie, wrapped in Winston-Salem this year. The Victorian Era film used locations throughout the Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad area, including an authentic Civil War battlefield, an antique train, and historic downtown streets. Rounding out its first year of business, the Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad Film Commission has hosted a number of television commercials, several documentaries, and two television movies, including *Taking Liberty,* a CBS pilot.

The Commission is one of a dozen organizations utilizing the innovative Kodak CD picture exhange, allowing 10,000 location photographs to be viewed, enhanced, and modified on CD.

For information: Winston-Salem Peidmont Triad Film Commission, (910) 777-3787, Ext. 1237.

Tennessee

Some of the projects shot in Tennessee this year include *Paper Mansions: The Dottie West Story,* a television movie starring Michelle Lee and chronicling the life of the early country star, filmed around Nashville; CBS' *Sing Me the Blues, Lena,* starring Ann-Margret and George Segal, also shot around Nashville; the BBC's *Crocodile Shoes,* a seven-part mini-series about a fictional English country music singer's rise to fame, filmed in Nashville and Music Row; and *Get Serious,* a film starring Ray

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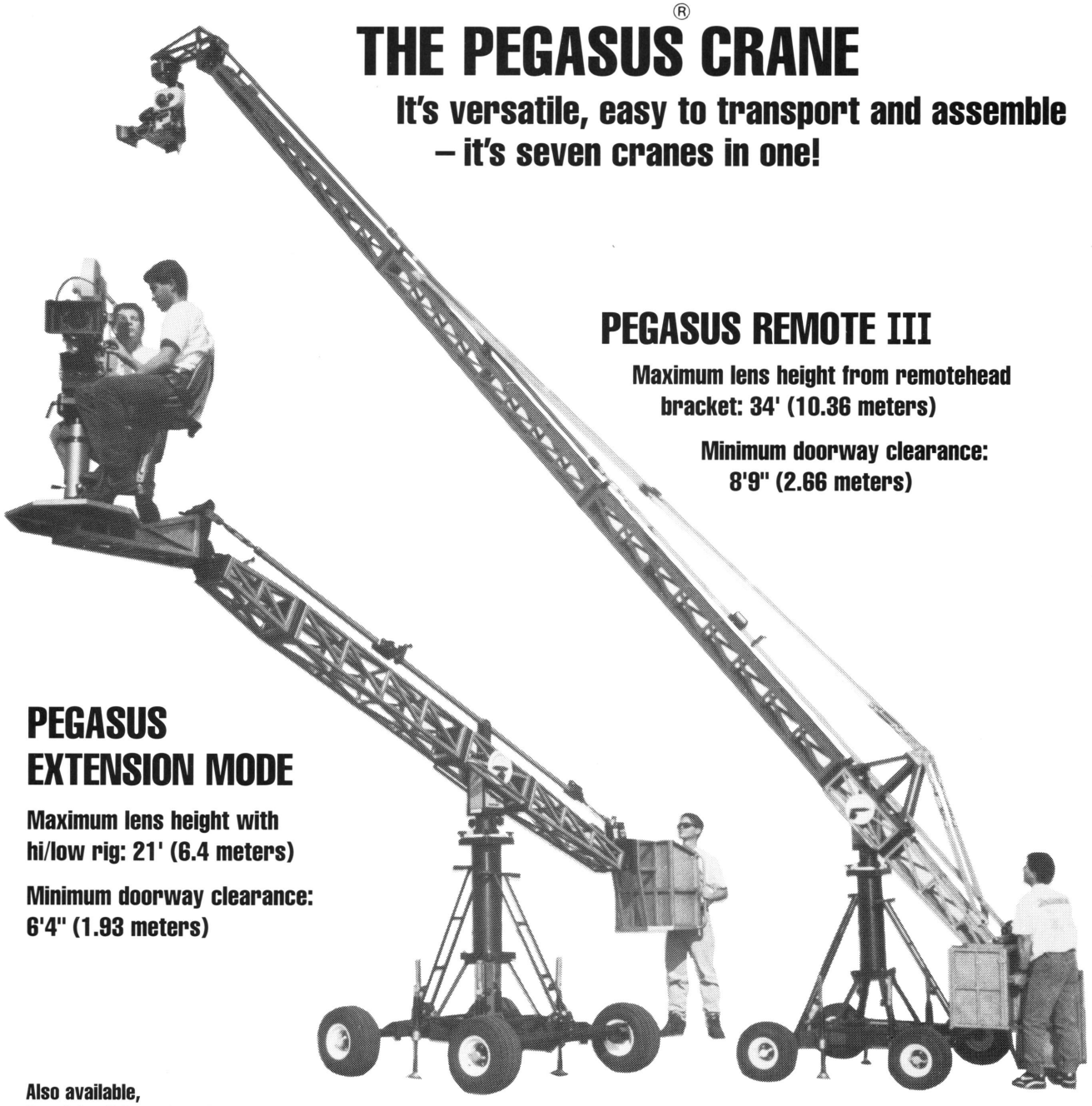

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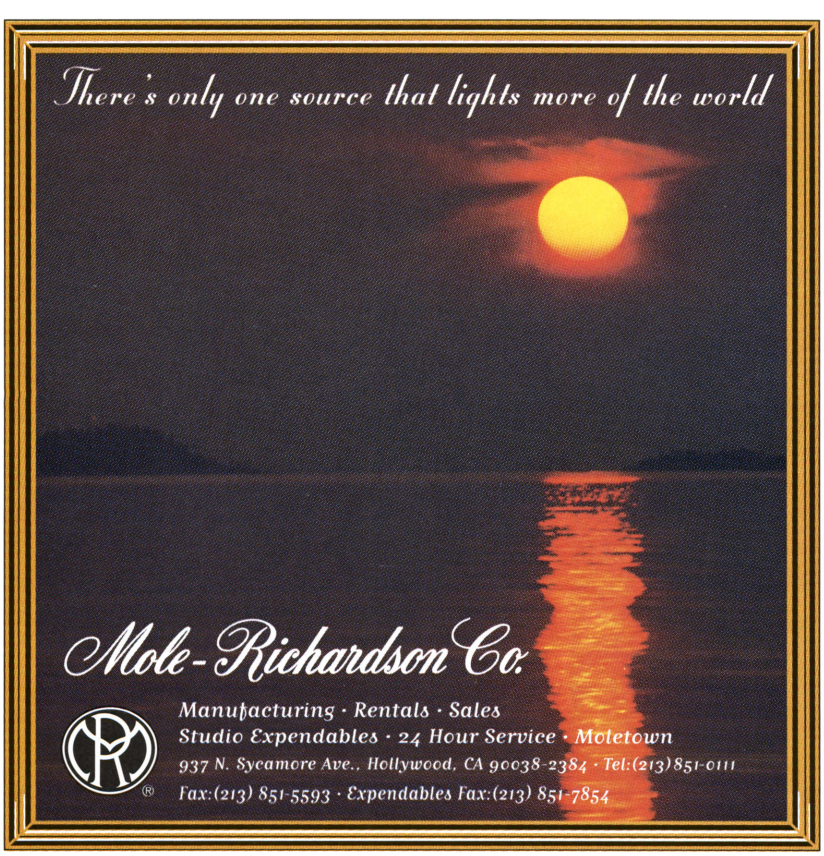
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Stevens, filmed in Nashville, surrounding counties and at the old State Prison. CBS' series *Christy* wrapped up the season in Townsend in the Great Smoky Mountains in East Tennessee. *Expert,* a feature thriller slated for release this year, wrapped in early August after shooting all over Nashville with a crew made up of 80% locals.

For information: Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission, 320 Sixth Avenue North, 7th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0790.

Upcoming Events

February 3-12: 12th Annual Miami Film Festival, Miami, FL. For information: (305) 377-3456.

February 7-March 6: Sinar Bron Studio Technik Workshops, Various West Coast Seattle, Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Los Angeles, Orange Country, San Diego. For information: (908) 754-5800, FAX (908) 754-5807.

February 12-15: The First Pan-Chromatic Conference, sponsored by the Inter-Society Color Council, Williamsburg, VA. For information: (703) 318-0514.

February 15-17: VISCOMM/mxMedia, a mixed media exhibition for creators of visual communications, London. For information: (203) 852-0500, ext. 107, FAX (203) 831-8446.

February 22-26: Recent Spanish Cinema, including tribute to director Bigas Luna, American Cinematheque at the Directors Guild Theater, Hollywood. For information: (213) 466-FILM.

February 25-27: Post/LA Expo (at the American Film Market), trade show for the postproduction industry, Santa Monica, CA. For information: American Film Marketing Association, (310) 447-1555, FAX (310) 447-1666.

March 1 DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: April 7-9: Canyonlands Alternative Film/Video Festival focusing on independent alternative film and video, Moab, Utah. For information: (801) 259-3330.

March 1 DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: Movies on a Shoestring at the 37th Annual Rochester International Independent Film Festival.

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Investigating *Incident at Deception Ridge*

Careful planning and ingenuity — and spectacular locations — give this cable movie the feel of a feature.

by Jean Oppenheimer

Cinematographer David Geddes, CSC, perched atop a suspended tram, hoists a Panaflex onto his shoulder, adjusts a 40-pound bag of lead shot hanging down his back, then cautiously leans out over the tram's side — way over. Twelve feet below him, hanging onto a rope attached to the bottom of the metal cage, is actor Michael O'Keefe. Three hundred feet below O'Keefe, a raging waterfall empties into a foaming, churning river that snakes its way down a picturesque Canadian gorge.

The tram, the cables carrying it across the 400-foot-wide chasm, and a cabin sitting along one ridge were all designed and built expressly for the production in progress, not an unusual undertaking on a feature film. But *Incident at Deception Ridge* isn't a feature film; it's a TV movie being produced for the USA cable network. The elaborate stunts and complicated set pieces are just two of the elements which distinguish this character-driven, non-stop actioner from its small-screen competition.

"It was extremely ambitious," concedes Geddes, "but [director John] McPherson and I wanted to give the film a big screen feel, to open it up and take advantage of the beautiful Canadian vistas and forests we were working in. So we used the cranes, remote-control cameras and skylifts usually reserved for the feature people. I've worked with all that equipment before on TV shoots but usually, because of the time and budgetary constraints, you have to pick just one or two days to use it."

Executive producer Kevin Brown agrees. "Very rarely on a TV movie can you get away with more than one large-scale stunt or set piece, because you simply don't have the money. In addition, the shooting schedule is so tight it usually precludes the amount of prep time needed for setting up more than one major stunt."

Incident at Deception Ridge contained five major stunts. The tram sequence illustrates the care and ingenuity practiced on all of them.

The scene calls for the tram to cross the gorge (actually, Cleveland Dam) with four cast members inside — and the bad guys in hot pursuit. Hero O'Keefe, who hasn't had time to jump aboard, grabs hold of a rope, swings under the tram as it pulls away from the dock, and climbs into the bucket.

Set designer Doug Higgins and special effects coordinator Gary Paller worked with Canadian ski-lift engineers to design and build the tram, which had to pass strict government safety codes. McPherson contemplated using a stunt double for wide shots of the leap, then blue-screening O'Keefe's close-ups, but the budget wouldn't allow for a traveling matte shot.

O'Keefe was game to do his own stunts, and was attached to the tram with a body harness. Eight cameras were used to record the jump. For the close-ups, Geddes elected to operate himself (partially in order to minimize the number of people in the eight-by-six-foot bucket and partially because he knew it would be a fun shot to do). Between the Panaflex on his shoulder and the lead hanging down his back to counterbalance the camera's weight, he was carrying a total of 80 pounds.

"I needed to be there because of the changing light situation," he explains. "In that canyon, at that particular time of day, you start out in full sun and progress into the shady side of the canyon and then into the woods. There was a major exposure difference all the way across."

Geddes relied on his many years of experience as both an operator and director of photography to judge the exposure. At times O'Keefe would be in the shade while the waters surging below him were in the sun, requiring an operator who could instantly and instinctually split the ratio.

Shifting light conditions were just one of the hurdles to overcome during four days of shooting inside a moving bus on a winding mountain road (this sequence ended with the vehicle crashing through a barrier and plunging down the side of a cliff). McPherson wanted the camera to move not only up and down the aisle but from side to side as well. The space was too narrow to accommodate a Steadicam and a handheld approach would have been too restrictive.

"The original concept was to rig some sort of dolly tracks on the floor," says Geddes, "but we eliminated that because John wanted the freedom to go anywhere in the bus — over the tops of the seats, down the aisle in both directions — and to do 180-degree turns. We began examining the overhead luggage racks, [because] they looked like a built-in system that could be used for dolly tracks."

Key grip Dillard Brinson designed what became known as the "bungee-cam." He and his crew built tracks down each side of the luggage rack, with little pieces of aluminum tubing that made them appear as if they were part of the rack. Then, using a series of skateboard wheels, they attached a second set of rails, so that tubes were going both laterally and horizontally. This produced a "dolly-within-a-dolly," with the second set of rails spanning the aisle.

Photos by Kevin Brown, Dave Geddes and Alan Zenuk

Filming the tram sequence, 300 feet above a churning waterfall. In bottom photo, cinematographer David Geddes, CSC focuses upon actor Michael O'Keefe, who was attached to the tram with a hidden body harness.

The next step was devising a system for hanging the camera from the second set of rails. Brinson suggested the bungee system; not only would this give the camera the freedom to move in all directions, but it would also absorb shocks along the twisting mountain road.

"We built a supporting frame around the camera," explains Geddes, "and then found the balance point on the frame. We put an eyebolt in there and hung the bungee cord from it. We maneuvered the frame until we found the neutral balance point. We just kept hanging it until we got it."

Operator John Clothier cradled the camera with his hands, maneuvering it at will, but the bungee carried the weight of the Panaflex. Because of the very limited space in the bus aisle, there was no room for the first assistant to stand, so a wireless remote focusing system was fitted onto the lens. First assistant Tim Spencer would stand in either the front or the back of the bus and focus while looking over the backs of everybody and trying to judge the distance from the actors to the camera.

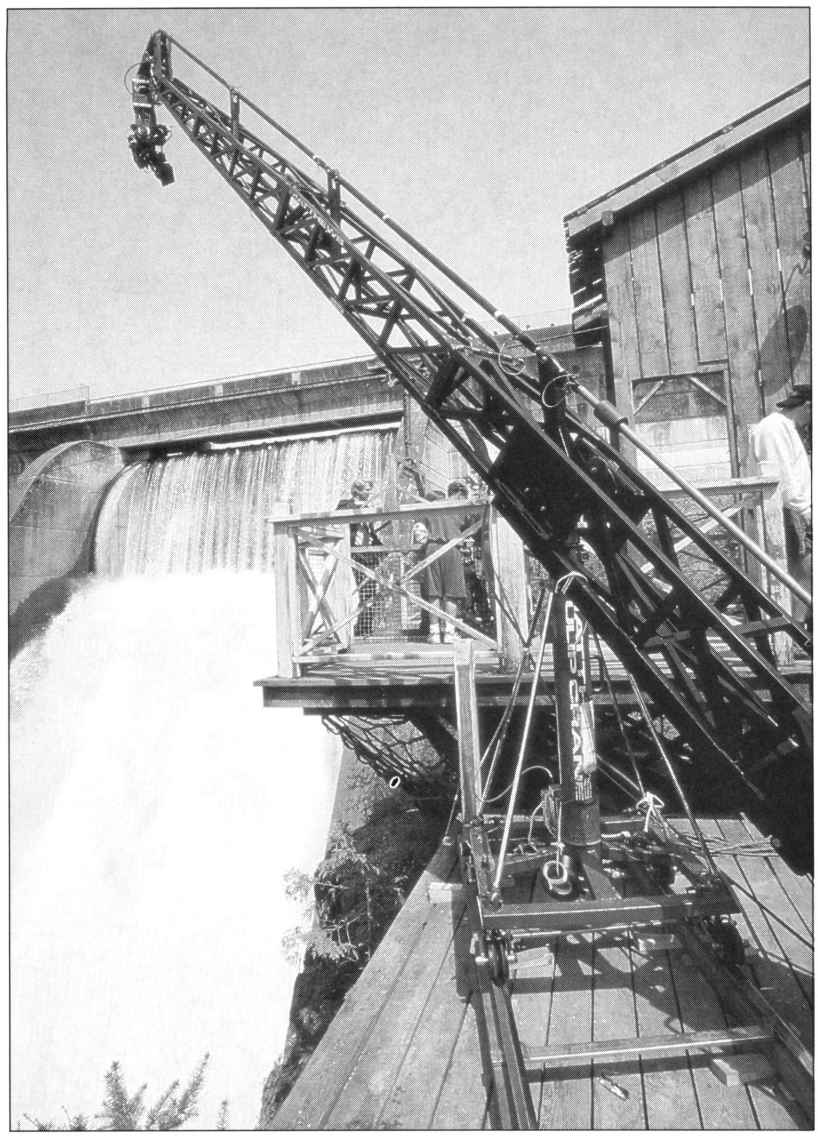
Lighting the interior of the bus as it snaked its way down the mountain road, constantly passing in and out of sunlight, brought anticipated problems: how to set a balance that would look natural and how to make it appear that the light was always streaming in from the outside. The grips built a roof rack on the top of the bus, with tubes extending out from each side, upon which lights could be hung. Keeping the lights out of the shot proved tricky because the bungee system allowed such a free-moving camera that 90 percent of the bus interior could be seen at any given time.

Given the location and the lighting situation, Geddes opted to use Kodak's 5298 stock. The cameraman, who says he grew up with Kodak and always uses it, had nothing but praise for the new film stock.

"98 is a much finer-grain stock, which gives you more resolution. The higher resolution gives you greater over- and underexposure latitude; that is, you can overexpose it or underexpose it and still have detail. In fact, I overexposed it more than I would most film stocks because I knew I would still have details in the overexposure. When we got into the dark areas — driving through heavier wooded areas of the road — we'd still have enough exposure."

To give himself even more freedom, Geddes overexposed the film one stop, then told the lab to pull it in the processing. "I can go from huge sunlit areas into absolutely no sunlight whatsoever and still be able to maintain good image quality."

Not even the 98 could help



A remote camera attached to a Tulip Crane was used to get footage of water flowing from the Cleveland Dam.

Geddes his first day on the bus, however. "It was the ultimate lighting nightmare," he says, shaking his head. "When we set up it was a very bright, clear day and I didn't need all that much in the way of lighting. I used maybe two HMI Pars. There was so much natural daylight that all I had to do was key the actors, but I didn't even key them; I just gave them highlights.

"As soon as John called 'action,' a huge cloud rolled in over the mountain and became so dark it was like nighttime. It rained, it hailed; there was no light to shoot inside the bus, nothing to give me a proper exposure. It was horrible, because on a film set you have to keep shooting, and I had to say, 'We can't; we have to stop.' I had to re-light the inside of the bus."

The biggest stunt — and the one over which the filmmakers had the least control — was the bus crash. The script called for the Trailways vehicle to plow through a roadside barrier and plummet 400 feet down a brush-filled ravine. Multiple cameras were set up along the crash route; one was mounted inside the bus to catch the view out the front windshield.

"Our camera placement worked," laughs Geddes. "We got good visuals. But the bus ended up hitting three of the cameras; one was damaged and two were destroyed, including one we put in a fancy crash cage called a 'Ned Kelly' (named after the infamous 19th-century Australian outlaw, who wore a homemade suit of armor during his exploits). The stunt people thought the bus would end up at one spot, so we put the cameras several feet in front of it. But it's hard to calculate where things are going when you're driving through the bush, and the bus hurtled past the spot, hitting the cameras."

Because the odds of some kind of equipment damage are high, Eyemos are generally used for crash stunts. In this case, though, even the cage-protected Eyemo was torn apart by the force of the bus.

The crash itself turned out to be a bit disappointing. The idea was to have the bus roll over when it hit the bottom of the ravine, but because the Trailways had so much weight and momentum behind it, it simply plowed down the mountainside and stopped. The crew had to stage the flip on the following day.

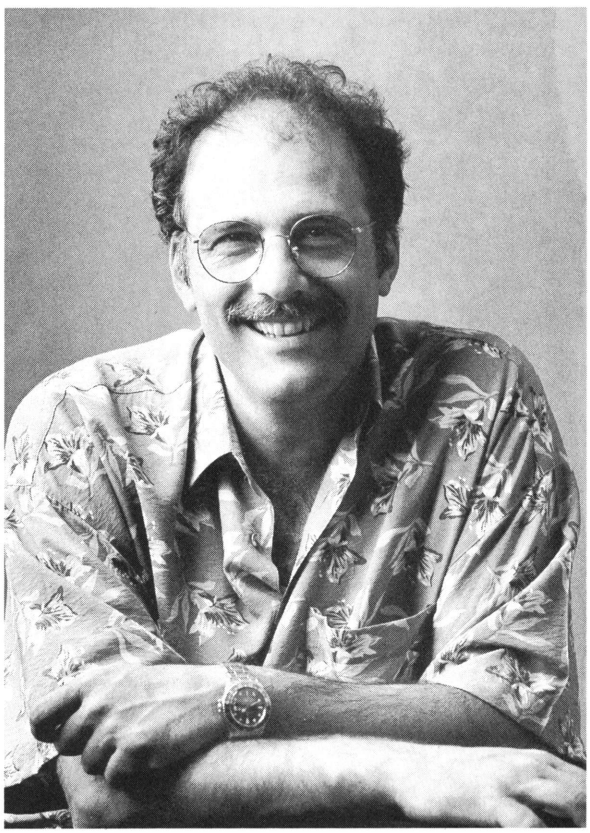
"Basically, we flipped it over in cuts," says Geddes. "We did it via the 'poor man's process': a handheld camera inside and everybody moving around, making it look like the bus was going from side to side. We did just one shot of the bus actually falling over on its side, which was accomplished by pulling the vehicle over with a cable."

Originally penned as a $30 million feature film, *Incident at Deception Ridge* had to be streamlined when it was picked up by the USA cable network. "The network still wanted to make a big action picture," says executive producer Brown. "They wanted all the stunts kept in. Instead of eliminating the stunts, we cut the number of characters in half, cut 30 pages from the script, and tried to concentrate the action into a very limited number of locations."

Only six locations in and around Vancouver were used in the film: Mt. Seymour, Lynn Canyon, the town of Horseshoe Bay, the Cleveland Dam, Lynn Headwaters and the Capilano Fish Hatchery. The proximity of the locations and careful scheduling helped maximize shooting time.

"Moving is what takes time," says Geddes. "The one thing you don't want to do during the

"The Clairmonts have a good system and big ears," says Director of Photography Angelo Pacifici



Angelo Pacifici has been a DP since 1989, making commercials for Coca Cola, American Airlines, Pacific Bell, Acura, Infiniti, Budweiser, Kodak, Disneyland, Heineken, Minolta, Spain Tourism, General Motors, Lincoln Mercury, Marshall Fields, The National Guard and others. He was DP on the feature California Myth and he has shot numerous rock videos.

"The Assistants I work with are much happier when they get to prep at Clairmont," says Angelo Pacifici. "They tell me things pretty much go like clockwork over there."

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"The day before that shoot, the client and agency were still making changes. Actors would be moving in and out of frame at different speeds. I suggested ramping the Speed-Aperture Computer up and down at will. Not to programmed settings, but on the fly."

Overnight

"While the prep was going on, I called Alan Albert to ask whether a wild control like that existed for the S.A.C. It didn't; but he had Clairmont build one for me, literally overnight. They delivered it to us next morning, on the set in Long Beach."

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"The Clairmonts have big ears when it comes to what people need," says Mr. Pacifici. "I can call Jim Meade for a piece of custom gear and I know it'll be designed intelligently. It'll also work smoothly and even *look* great. Guys like Alan and Jim are the unsung heroes of this business."

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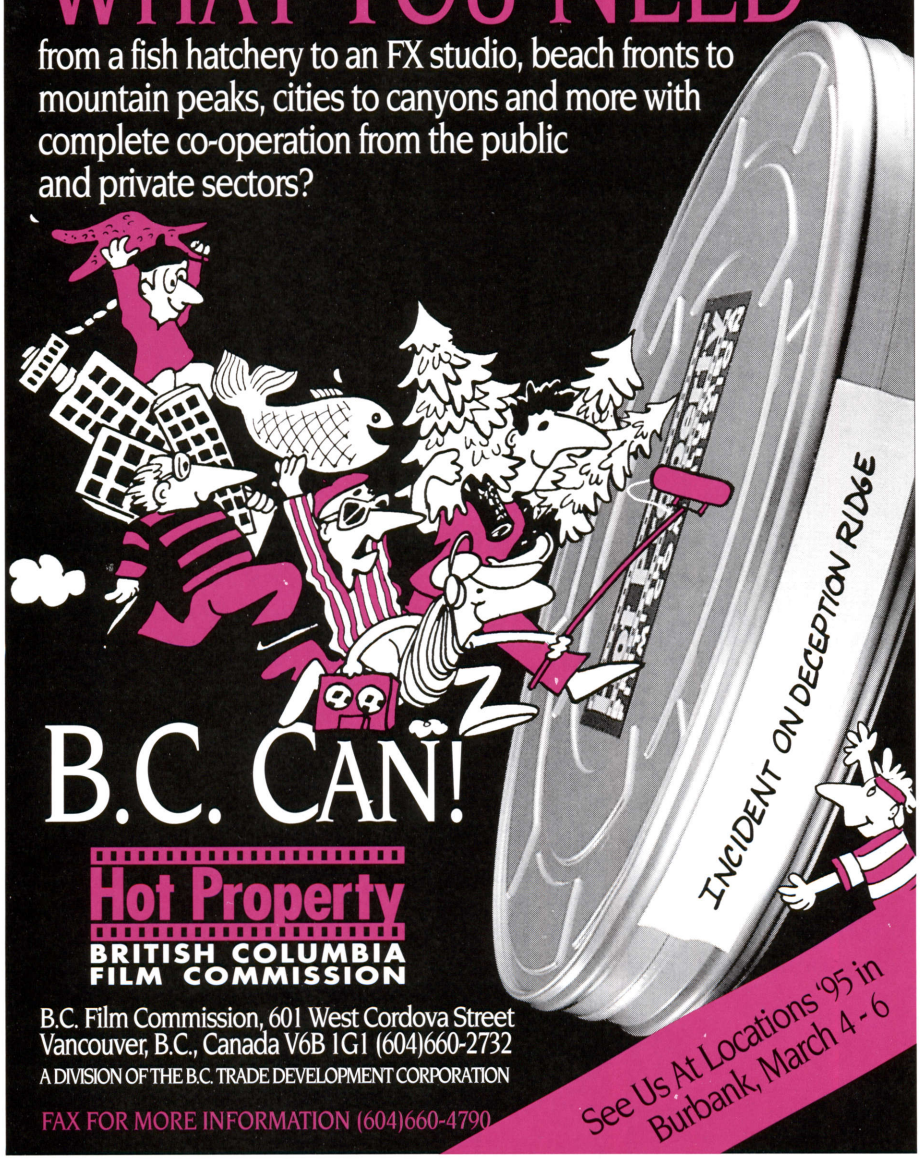

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day is have down time." Extra crew members were hired specifically to haul equipment to hard-to-reach Lynn Canyon while other scenes were being filmed elsewhere. Four different forest scenes were shot by literally keeping the camera in the same spot and merely pointing it in different directions.

Incident at Deception Ridge marked the second time that Geddes and cinematographer-turned-director John McPherson, ASC had worked together (the first was on USA's *Dirty Work*). The two men share a fondness for psychologically and visually dark stories. "I want to see rich, velvet blacks," says McPherson, "and when you want to see into them you light into them and have rich exposures."

"We both like for the action to go through light," agrees Geddes. "We don't want everything to be lit; we want the actors to move in and out of the light. As a former cinematographer, John understands how to get that look, and he'll design a shot so I can give it to him."

"John is also very concerned with the quality of the visual image. I can go to him and say 'This isn't working,' and he'll say 'Okay, let's change the blocking.' He understands the problems. Most directors do, but it's easier with an ex-director of photography, who knows instinctually."

One of the film's most striking images was captured at the fish hatchery as actress Linda Purl, gun in hand, confronts Ed Begley, Jr. at the end of a long underground hallway. McPherson likes the visual effect created by shafts of light passing through a moving fan, so he had a large fan, five feet in diameter, built and positioned behind the actors.

Geddes got the effect he wanted by using a 4000-watt Xenon light. "It's a very powerful, daylight-balanced lamp and it gives very direct light," he says. "I experimented with it, trying two lights to have multiple shafts, but I didn't like the look and decided to use just one. I put it on a tripod on the ground directly in the middle behind the fan. We had to [widen] the center of the fan so

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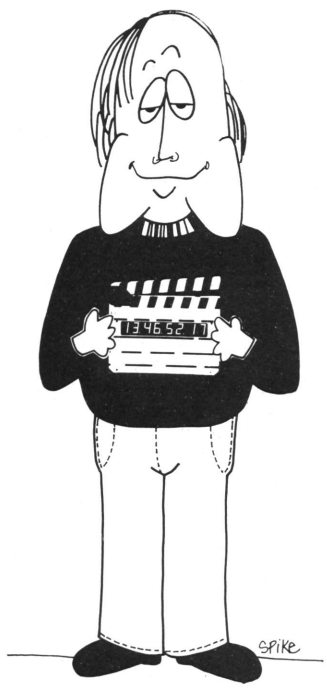

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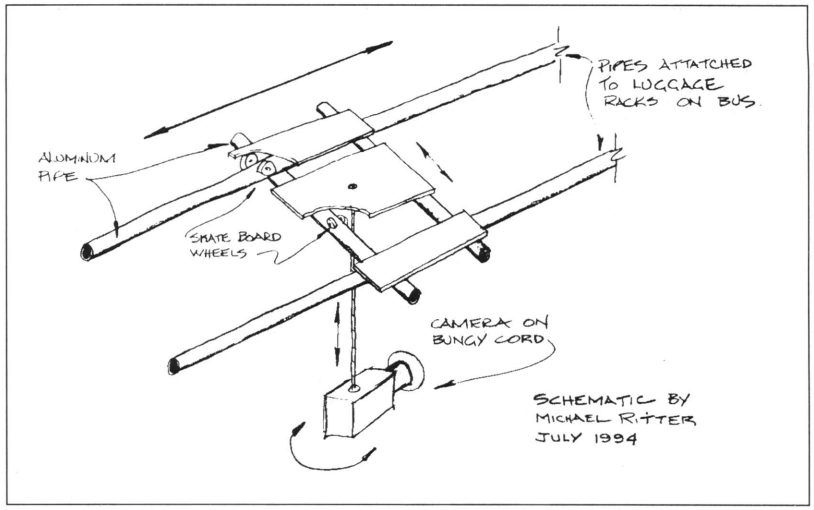
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you couldn't see the source of the light."

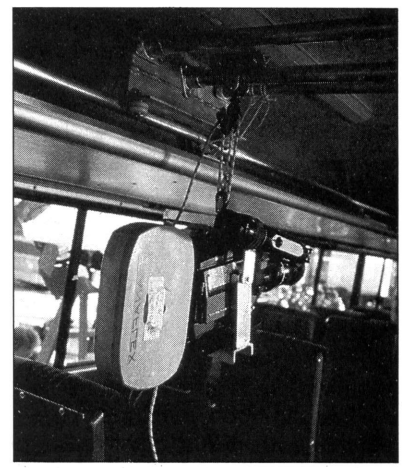
With a color temperature of 5500 degrees Kelvin, the daylight-balanced light looked blue, an effect McPherson and Geddes purposely sought for atmosphere. "The film stock we used is balanced for tungsten light (3200 degrees Kelvin)," explains Geddes. "When you expose tungsten film to daylight or daylight-balanced lamps, it records it as blue. Cast members told me the lighting effect facilitated their performances by setting the mood."

While the Xenon was on full power for the long shots, a neutral-density gel had to be placed in front of the lamp for the tighter shots. Otherwise, the light was too overpowering.

Effects like those used in the fan scene helped give *Incident at Deception Ridge* a big-screen look and feel, as did the 40-foot crane shots, the use of a Hot Head and the daily use of the Steadicam. In addition to the liberal use of such high-cost, time-intensive equipment, McPherson and Geddes made a conscious decision to stylize and shoot the film like a feature.

Instead of sticking to close-ups and reverses, as most television movies do, McPherson designed complicated moving shots which took advantage of the camera's fluidity. "John designs and choreographs the shots so the master also becomes your coverage," says Geddes. "Everything basically takes place in one shot,

A look at the spec sheet for a special camera rig (seen at right) used to achieve moving shots down the aisle of a bus.



maybe two, but the camera is always moving. For example, on a crane shot you set up the shot wide to show the whole location, then crane down as people walk toward the camera; you pick up coverage as they pass by, then rotate on them and follow as they turn away. It's all one shot. Choreographed properly, you can do an entire scene this way."

Asked what he considered the biggest challenge on the shoot, McPherson laughs: "Just being able to breath going up those mountains." For Geddes, it was finding the time to use all the wonderful equipment at his disposal. "The big difference between features and a TV movie like *Incident at Deception Ridge* is time," says Geddes. "We made the time. We put a lot of energy into production values, and carefully planned scheduling and locations so we could not only have the toys, but have the time to use them."

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A demanding landscape suffuses an Irish tale with magic.

by David Heuring

Photos by David Appleby, courtesy of First Look Realeasing

Haskell Wexler, ASC and John Sayles first collaborated on *Matewan*, the gripping saga of coal miners, labor unions and Pinkerton's agents that won an Oscar nomination for Wexler and critical acclaim for Sayles.

Their new effort, *The Secret of Roan Inish*, isn't nearly so politically charged. The story is based on a 1957 novella by Rosalie K. Fry and follows the spiritual fortunes of an Irish fisherman's family. The story takes place on the windswept west coast of Ireland, and that is where it was filmed.

Celtic myth often deals with the lure of the natural spiritual habitat, whether it be the land or the sea. *The Secret of Roan Inish* is about what happens to people when they lose an old way of life; it's about rekindling one's relationship to nature; but it's also about myths, legends, and their place in the real, "modern" world.

Wexler and Sayles were recently asked about the production of *The Secret of Roan Inish*.

Q & A: Haskell Wexler, ASC

***AC*: With all the unpredictable elements in this film — children, animals, weather, tides — what steps did you take to ensure consistency?**

Wexler: We took a number of steps to anticipate the elements that were out of our control. To simplify, I decided to limit the stocks to 5245 and 5293. I chose 5245 because of the extremely fine grain and the excellent definition on landscapes. Long wide shots are almost like having a bigger negative. If I needed greater depth of field, we'd break out the 93.

There were some low light situations; why not take advantage of faster film?

Wexler: In very low level mystic hour and fire shots I pushed 93 one stop. From tests before shooting I could see there was not noticeable deterioration rating it at 400 ASA. I did have to remember that 93 is more contrasty than 96, so I had to give a little more fill.

Since *Roan Inish*, you've done testing of the new 5287 stock. What were your impressions?

Wexler: I would have loved to have had 87 in Ireland. It improves certain aspects of 93 by digging in the shadows, and being more forgiving on the underexpose side without sacrificing grain.

The budget was modest?

Wexler: A very low budget by Hollywood standards. For sure, on a John Sayles film all the money goes towards putting it up on the screen. I often think of the waste in studio projects, where people who don't understand filmmaking do their budgeting solely by the numbers. Their economy contributions center on false savings. The philosophy is 1.) cut below the line; and 2.) cut below the line.

How did the budget affect the equipment package?

Wexler: Well, we couldn't afford great toys: Akela crane, Technocrane, Ray Beams, 13 to 1 zooms — I love that stuff. Fortunately, I own a few goodies like the Preston Speed Aperture Control and a Weaver Steadman, which John rents at super bargains.

Where did you use the Weaver Steadman?

Wexler: There was a shot of twenty or so live crabs crawling on the fisherman's floor. The Weaver in conjunction with a prism on the lens let us dolly on the deck like a vacuum cleaner.

What kind of prep time did you have?

Wexler: About a week here in Los Angeles just going through my equipment and working with Scott [operator Scott Sakamoto] on customs lists.

How did you prepare on location?

Wexler: I guess you know that our location was not the typical Irish location we're used to seeing in films. We were in the northwest, which is rugged, rough, rocky country. John had spent time there writing the script and getting

Opposite page: ***Sayles (left) and Wexler.***
Above: ***Eschewing "stage Irish," the film concentrates on the spiritual relationship of people to their natural surroundings. The crew was not immune to the simple island environment of sea, sky, and rolling green hills.***

Above: ***John Lynch (left) plays Tadhg, a black-sheep cousin who encourages Fiona (at right, played by ten-year-old Jeni Courtney) to unravel her family history and the truth about her missing brother.*** **Right:** ***The mysterious boy is discovered to have found refuge in the family's abandoned cottage. Wexler photographed the cottage interior in at least three distinct styles.***

to know the locals, observing and noting the tides, and just settling in like the old documentary flickers.

But what about your prep?

Wexler: Well, I was trying to say that John had already done a lot of it for me. During the scout we walked and climbed to every spot he had in mind. John had my compass and finder and we talked about the shots.

Why the emphasis on tides?

Wexler: Working around tide changes was part of John's critical prep because the tides in the area are tremendous. The whole look of the place would change drastically. Shots in a certain place would look one way, and then bing! — the tide would go back a hundred yards, and it looked like a different place.

You used mostly zooms?

Wexler: Practically all the exteriors were shot with zoom lenses, either the 18-100mm Cooke or 25-250mm Angenieux. We didn't take lenses on and off much because there was salt spray and salt air; the salt and the spray is pretty tough on the equipment. The clean-up job after every day's work had to be painstaking and thorough.

The landscapes all seem to consist of green rolling hills, the sea and the sky. How did you control the light?

Wexler: Maybe, on the subject of nature, control is too strong a word. We roll with it, we enhance what we see, and we think about the range of printer lights. In Ireland we enjoyed and utilized some of the northern latitude light. It extended mystic hour to maybe three hours of light hanging in the sky. Sometimes when nature didn't do it all we helped with graduates on top, side or bottom. I had a set of color graduated filters that were used only once.

Did you just luck out with the great sky over the animatronic seal?

Wexler: The sky was good and susceptible to accepting a Panchro mirror 90 neutral going 30% down the frame.

What about diffusion? I didn't get the impression of a lot of filtration.

Wexler: I'm not sure I remember exactly what we put in front of the lens. Pretty much Ultra Cons, double fogs, and Mitchell B mostly to take the edge off the extreme sharpness of the new lenses. I was thinking of using some of my old favorites like the Angenieux 20-120 or a beat-up 25-250 from *Bound for Glory*. I figure they would look about the same as the new lenses with filtration.

How did you handle the flashbacks to Ireland in the 1930s — for example, the scene where a teacher is trying to make the students speak English rather than Gaelic?

Wexler: I did some tests with a sepia 3, which has a fog combination. John liked it — I mean he didn't say he didn't like it. The sepia is in a number of scenes. We were careful to give a good gray scale so the lab wouldn't erase what we'd put in.

Aside from the scenes in Donegal and a few shots with wildflowers, the colors are earthy, muted, and from a limited palette.

Wexler: It seems obvious, but a lot of that has to do with what we were photographing — I mean we have a lot of control nowadays, but we're all photographers. (Laughs.)

Also, there's a timer at Du

Fiona discovers the ramshackle cottage — and a surprise within. Wexler occasionally used neutral grads to bring down the skies when nature was less than cooperative.

Art with whom John has worked. His name is Gene Zippo. He timed *Matewan* and *Roan Inish* — a very creative person. The timer is an essential person in the chain of our work, and I know they're not spoken of very much. I value their input as creative people.

Your dailies were done at Technicolor in London?

Wexler: Yes. We had some problems with the film — we were seeing flecks of white on the print and it was driving us nuts. Technicolor said, "Don't worry about it, we'll take it out and reprint it," but we wanted to know what the hell it was. It was appearing in both cameras. Apparently the lab talked to Kodak and they couldn't determine what it was. Kodak and Technicolor eventually determined what the problem was — a combination of the relatively new 93 stock and the drying/cleaning mechanism they used at Technicolor. It's a brush system, and it allowed little flecks to come off the sprocket holes on the film.

What was most impressive to me about it was that both Technicolor and Kodak immediately sent representatives to us on location — from London, a day and a half trip — to try to get to the bottom of it. It was interesting to watch these two big companies trying to find the source of the problem. It was sort of like Rolls-Royce — you know, if you have a problem with your Rolls-Royce, and you call up, no matter where you are Rolls-Royce will come and fix it for you — and then deny that there was ever any problem. (Laughs.)

What makes you decide to operate on a shot?

Wexler: I did less of my camera-hogging on this film. Scott Sakamoto is my operator and he's excellent. We've been together a long time. When I take over a camera to operate it's because I have to see. When there are close-ups I generally operate, simply because I just have to see it through the lens at that time, mostly for the lighting. On the framing we have video assist and I can double-check that. And Scott's ideas about framing are excellent. I think that's one of the advantages of working with people you've worked with before. The assistant I worked with, Paul Englefield, a British guy, I had worked with on the Imax film *[Rolling Stones At The Max]*, and he was a very good focus puller, very careful, cautious and meticulous. He's one of these guys that — I don't care if the tide is coming in and the sun's going to be covered up in the blackness — he would do his proper thing.

Did you work under the British crew system?

Wexler: All of the crew except for Scott were either Irish or British, and they work in a very different style than we do. We know about how the operator normally works more closely with the director. But there were times that their system was frustrating. If the camera's on a tripod and you want to move it five or six feet over, the grips take charge, and they pull out all the cables, all the connections to the video assist, and the batteries, and take the camera off the tripod, move the tripod over six feet, and then put it all back together. It was driving me and Scotty nuts — it's so overtly inefficient.

A couple of times when the tide was coming in rapidly, Scotty would grab the camera, put it on his shoulder, set it down, level it, and shoot. The first couple of times we did that, they really were insulted. We had a little meeting and hammered it out, but they felt that Scott picking up the camera and moving it was a slap in the face. They were just trying to help.

Right and below right: ***A World War II-era amphibious military vehicle known as a "Duck" provided the crew a measure of protection from the fast-changing tides. Wexler had experience with the unusual conveyance — he rode one ashore in the Allied invasion of Sicily.***

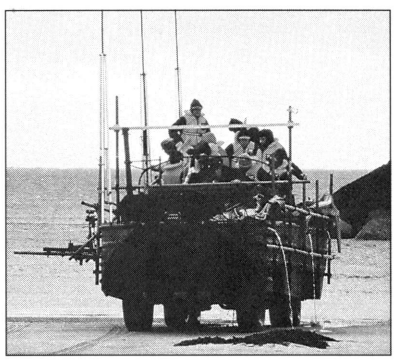
I must say that all of the technicians we had were really excellent. That Irish gaffer, Louie Conroy — I'd take him anywhere.

A good portion of the film takes place on the water. What method did you develop for working in boats?

Wexler: For our "camera boat" we found an old, beat-up World War II "Duck," an amphibious vehicle designed for the armed forces. It was ironic because I hadn't seen one since I went ashore in one in World War II, when we invaded Sicily. The advantage was that we could operate it in the water, on the land, or any combination of the two caused by the tides.

For one water shot, John wanted it to appear as if the boy were riding on the back of a seal. Before we went to Ireland, I asked Garrett Brown how we could do it, and he didn't think any Steadicam application would do it, so he suggested making a little arm on the bow of the boat. We were thinking about putting an underwater camera on the arm, so the camera would alternately go under and emerge through the surface of the water, the way seals swim along the surface. We rented an underwater camera from England but it was cumbersome and awkward to work with. They may have better ones, but we didn't find one.

Instead, we found a waterproof periscope, which worked great. We were able to put the Arri II on the arm, which was mounted on the Duck, and Scotty would operate by looking at video.



We were out in a rather heavy storm when we did this particular shot. It really took some doing to get it right. We had a bilge pump on the Duck that barely worked, so we had to bail and pump because the thing was about to sink. Of course it was very cold, and John is very macho — he was there in shorts. We were all freezing, but we wanted to get that shot.

According to John Sayles' book on the making of *Matewan*, there was some tension on the set between the two of you.

Wexler: It's true; it was because I thought I knew about that period and those coal miners, and so I had strong opinions. On this one, I didn't. John knows Irish history, the Irish tradition of storytelling, and he knew it was a very, very low budget. Since he knows and I don't know, I made a conscious decision to be his "obedient servant," like the old Orson Welles sign-off says. I decided to be as open as I could be and see what happened. I did that pretty well on certain things. Of course I gave some suggestions, but then John responded in kind. It was not the kind of artistic combat that we had on *Matewan*. We were both more respectful, and it was a good atmosphere all around.

Sayles has racked up a lot of experience since *Matewan*.

Wexler: That's absolutely true. That's what's so smart about John — when he gets into something, he wants all the information, on any subject. You can talk to him about anything in the world, and he can come back with full knowledge on all subjects. He has a fantastic mind, but cool — he doesn't throw it at you.

I feel John is a very emotional guy, but on the surface you'll seldom know exactly what he's thinking. He'll seldom say "Gee, that was a great shot, I loved it." That's okay — a lot of times that love stuff is so "Hollywood" — but sometimes we need it.

Sayles is director, writer, producer and editor of this film. How does that affect the photography?

Wexler: What you're doing is out in the open. So often in films now the director has to say "Well, you know, they're going to see this back at the studio. We'd better shoot it this way." They're not going from their gut creative decision. They have to wonder what someone else will think — like on a commercial. So the advantage of John's position, for all of us, is that we know exactly what he wants and what he believes.

Sayles said he hoped that his control over the film — knowing on the set how things will cut together — allowed you to take a few more chances.

Wexler: That was one of the most difficult things — dealing properly with what will cut and what will match. It was difficult to retrain myself. All our training as directors of photography tells us to make things match, try to make it cuttable, to try to deliver footage so the cutter, who is somewhere else, can have his options. With John, when he said, "I don't care if she exits the frame here," it was like giving me a shot in the heart. I would feel panic, and he would say, "Don't worry, don't worry, I'm cutting it, I'll take care of it, I know." I'm very pleased with what

Wexler (seated, in tan cap) and operator Scott Sakamoto (behind camera, yellow sweater) had kudos for the all-Irish and British crew. The fast-changing weather and tides made for a tough shoot. Visible in the background is the framework for a thatched cottage.

he did with the film, and I'm very much in admiration of his ability to do things we don't normally do in films and make them work.

I understand you had animatronic as well as live seals.

Wexler: We worked very long hours under very rough conditions, but the seals were treated properly no matter what. If the water was going to be too cold for them, or the tide wasn't going to be right, we had to make adjustments. There are apparently all kinds of psychological things about seals. We would hear that "Well, she doesn't really feel right because Scotty was shooting it standing over there before, and maybe she's a little upset. Maybe we should use the other camera, it's a little quieter." We were very sensitive to the seals' psyches.

What did you learn from making this film?

Wexler: The film is a narrative with a lot of words, with a very literary feel. There's really no action in it to speak of; certainly there's no violence. There's not one gun anywhere. One of the things the film revealed to me was how far we've come from this kind of film — for whatever reason, without making a value judgment, good or bad. I felt strongly that the storytelling pace that I'm accustomed to in a movie theater is different from what it used to be. But I've also seen the film with children, and some respond and some don't. It depends a lot how deeply they are into video games and TV.

I also learned a lot from the atmosphere of the place and the filmmaking, and the Irishness of it, I guess you could say. It was very, very rewarding personally for Scott and me, who are very close. We were among people who take the time to talk. You always hear about the Irish drinking, but there wasn't a lot of drunkenness or anything, there was just time taken to talk about everything, to laugh, just to have three or four people visit and talk with no agenda. We felt we were rediscovering human beings.

Scott and I had a little house with a sheep wall around it. We got very adept at building fires with peat. It was cold, and a number of times we came back and the whole place would be so full of smoke we couldn't breathe.

Did your rediscovery affect the film?

Wexler: We felt like it would fit in with the mood of the film. It didn't make us have to work slowly. Often modern life detaches you from nature. Being closer to nature and being more conversant and having more interaction with humans in a sense says you're more alive, and your life is not controlled by things, is not defined by objects, it's not described by what you have. The opportunity to be in touch is very great when you're on a project like that.

Did you regret leaving?

Wexler: No. I'd had about enough of it. (Laughs.)

How was what you saw in the theater — the finished

Above: ***The woman at lower right is Susan Lynch (brother of John, also in the film), who plays the mythical half-human, half-seal creature called a Selkie. In the scene at hand, Lynch sheds her seal skin and takes her human form. All "effects" shots in the film were done using traditional in-camera techniques.*** **Right:** ***Since a good portion of the film takes place on the water, Sayles (seated in stern) and Sakamoto (at eyepiece) became skilled boatsmen. Fifteen-year-old Richard Sheridan and Mick Lally man oars. Lighting consists of the overcast sky and a reflector.***

very ambitious movie — I guess it was a small budget by Hollywood standards, but we had small children and animals, and weather and boats and tides, a lot of logistical tangles to sort through, and not a lot of money — I felt that Haskell's experience and sensibilities were perfect for the project.

On a tight schedule, you can't wait around for the light. Haskell's very, very good, even if you're shooting outdoors a lot, at helping with the schedule — figuring out what time of day we should shoot which material, so that we'll get the most out of what's naturally there in terms of light and other elements.

How did you prepare for the film?

Sayles: The woman who wrote the book, Rosalie K. Fry, originally illustrated it. I drew a couple of imaginary maps — an overhead view, and the view of the island into shore and the view of the bay from the shore. They tried to find something like that. They started down by Galway and searched up the entire west coast of Ireland to Donegal before they found the perfect spot.

Your approach to the Irish folk-tale material was very simple — just present it to the camera, really.

Sayles: The budget had a lot to do with that decision, but also, you're dealing with a little girl, in postwar Ireland, in an extremely remote area. This child has never seen television, or even a movie, for that matter. She's never

you originally imagined it?

Wexler: After we looked at the locations I began to get a picture in my mind of what the movie would look like. In reading the script I didn't, and it was probably at that point that I decided that I was in over my head, and that I should put myself at John's command.

At times when I was photographing it, I was afraid it was going to be boring. Quietly, to myself, I was critical of the way John was directing the young girl, because she didn't seem childlike to me, she seemed flat and boring. I was afraid the movie would be that way. In fact, I did say something to John, and he said "Look, this is the way it should be." And again, with my new "obedient servant" persona, I said, "Okay, this is the way it should be."

In the theater, John's cut just excited me so much. Inside I felt I was getting credit for things that were only a very small part mine. I was pleased for it, I was glad, but I still said, "Damn it, John, *that's* what you had in mind."

Q & A: John Sayles

***AC*: Tell us about the genesis of the film.**

Sayles: Maggie Renzi, the producer, had always loved the book from the time she was young, and found it again in her thirties, read it again and felt it would make a terrific movie. I actually wrote an adaptation just before we went down to Louisiana to shoot *Passion Fish*, so that she and her co-producer Sarah Green could go to Ireland and start to look at locations.

Why did you ask Haskell Wexler to photograph the film?

Sayles: We came upon the choice of Haskell because of a combination of reasons. Since we were not shooting in the States, we were considering a European cinematographer, but the more I thought about the look of the movie, and the fact that we were shooting a

seen morphing or any other special effects. So when she's being told these stories about what happened long ago, the way she pictures things should reflect that. So the transformation of the seal was very low-tech. All the effects in the film are done very simply, animatronically or mechanically, the same way you might have done it in 1920.

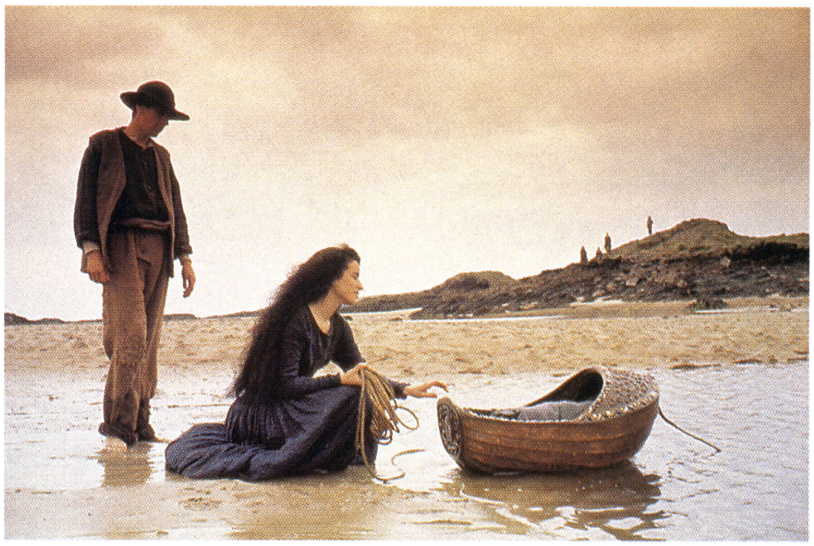
Tied in with that idea is the fact that from day one, we tried to give everything a certain weight. We didn't want things to float away, so to speak. There's a point at which special effects — morphing especially — can make everything a little lighter, a little more cartoonlike. We wanted everybody and everything in the movie to have physical weight, to have a solidity and a texture. It's something we tried to do in *Matewan* as well. We didn't use too much filtration, which tends to gauze things up and and make things a little lighter. Even though there's the magical realism aspect, and parts of the film are not literal, the kids still have to work. So Haskell was careful not to take the edge off too much.

What is your working method?

Sayles: I break the movie down into sequences, which look like a step outline. I give one to each department head, with specific notes. The music breakdown, for instance, might include a comment like, "I'd like a reel here or a vocal there." It'll just give them an idea of where I'd like cues, and the emotional quality of the cues. And I'll do the same thing for the photographer. The breakdown doesn't say anything about lenses or equipment. It'll say, for example, "Night, tense, fades into a dream sequence, spooky."

What is your storyboard/scheduling method?

Sayles: I had storyboarded, but the only ones that were really tight were the animatronic shots. The seal people have to know exactly what angle, and how far away. I had a 3 X 5 card for every shot in the movie. Each card included things like day or night, interior or exterior, whether there are real animals in this shot, puppets, cameras in boats, people in boats, et cetera.



According to legend, Liam Conneelly and his wife (a Selkie in human form) rocked their children in a special floating cradle made from the wood of shipwrecks and festooned with seashells. The cradle — and the lure of the sea — was handed down the generations to Fiona.

I also included what day it was to be shot, what time the sun rose and set on that day, and the tides.

Haskell and his guys became experts at making estimates, saying, "Yes, I think we can get this track laid and get two takes in before the water is up around our ankles." And sometimes we were wrong. But Haskell was able to stay flexible, and never painted himself into a corner. We always had something to shoot. And we would know that a particular shot would be much easier and take a quarter of the time if we did at the right time of day. And I think that's just Haskell's experience showing.

So logistical abilities and experience were the most important factors in your selection of a cinematographer?

Sayles: To get a consistent-looking movie — or even a consistent-looking sequence — when it's been put together from four different shooting days, you really need somebody who's outstanding with the planning. Certainly Haskell understands the emotional content and has a sensitivity. That's the beginning of the conversation. But the important second part is that I get the movie done on time and on budget. That's the toughest thing.

For example, the same cottage appeared in the film in several different eras. So in one scene the fireplace is a scooped-out hollow in the wall. Later, the fireplace provides the only light source, and still later on the kids have fixed it up and whitewashed the inside. Sometimes it was just the late afternoon sun coming in through the door or the window. So you have three or four very different types of light quality, and each has to be matched regardless of conditions.

We had all kinds of sequences that were spread over weeks. Every Saturday, we would shoot a half a day with seals in various situations. But each of those shots was to be plugged into a different sequence. We were just struggling to get the seals and a boat in the same frame doing a certain thing, and Scott Sakamoto, Haskell's operator, would be in his wetsuit, trying to grab semi-documentary stuff. And Haskell would be watching the sky and juggling seal scenes in his head.

It sounds like the emotional content of the scene is established first, so that on the set you can concentrate on execution.

Sayles: Every once in a while there's a shot where you can just kind of see Haskell winging it — where he's getting ideas as he's doing it. We've already talked about the feeling of the scene. He'll walk around, remember the conversation we had during the scout, and talk some more; you can see him getting the feel of the room again. There may be some interesting natural light that he makes use of, or he may blow the light in. But that's where it happens.

We probably do the most talking in those walk-throughs. Can we have this person go through some dark, and then back into light? What's the next scene

The filmmakers tested hundreds of young colleens for the role of Fiona Conneelly, eventually settling on Belfast-born Jeni Courtney, contemplative here in a County Donegal meadow of wildflowers.

going to be and what can make the transition visually? Because I'm also the writer and editor, I'm doing a lot of editing as we're shooting. Thus, we avoid the situation where you plan one kind of visual transition and then six scenes get cut out of the final version. My original cut of this was maybe five minutes longer than the final version.

Do you stay near camera during takes?

Sayles: I tend to stay on the set. I don't usually go away for long periods of time while the director of photography is lighting, partly because it's fun to watch him work, and because that's where you put a lot of feelings into things. I try to make the blocking rational, so that it's not x-marks, instead, it's "You're gonna go over and pick up this brush." And because the brush is in a certain spot, Haskell knows where the person is going, the person knows why they're going there. Rather than looking for their mark, they just go to the right spot.

And then what you do — Bob Richardson and Haskell both do this — is what Haskell calls "f— ing up the frame." The idea is to affect it so that it doesn't look so rehearsed if you can manage it. Not to the point of the jerky stuff, which has its place, but you throw a few more extras in the way. You take a couple more turns, so that it seems much more "found." Of course, this is tough on your operator and tough on your focus puller, but it's necessary when things feel a little too "setpiecey."

Do you ever operate?

Sayles: No! I can barely look through the lens. (Laughs.) One of the nice things about video assist is that I don't have to ride the dolly anymore. Haskell's an excellent operator, so he'll jump in when we need two cameras. Scott, who worked as an AC on *Matewan*, was operator on this. Bob Richardson [*Eight Men Out, City of Hope*] is an excellent operator, as is Michael Ballhaus [*Baby, It's You*], so I've also had the benefit of some really great operators.

You mentioned video assist. How do you use it?

Sayles: I don't like to get in the way of the cinematographer's eye when they're setting things up. I use it much more when we're setting the camera up than when we're actually shooting. I try to stay close to the actors if possible when we're shooting. I find it's real hard to get the heat of the performance from the video screen.

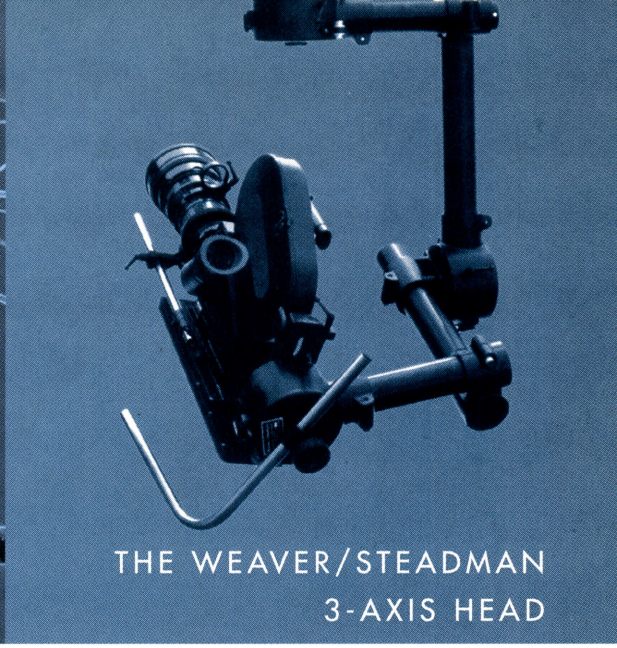
Filming in such a remote place, did you begin to feel isolated? Did the isolation have an effect on the film beyond the visual?

Sayles: Yes, and it was good. We never had to stop sound for cars or airplanes. This was a joy. It's a very, very small town. It's mostly sheep farms. And because you hook so much into the natural world, I think you have a better eye for it. When your day really does depend on the tides, you get into that rhythm and you begin to have a feeling for how long it's going to be before that tide is up around your ankles.

According to the production notes, "John Sayles will never call himself an artist."

Sayles: To me, "artist" is one of the terms that belong to professors and critics. I don't think in those terms. I tend to think in terms of "What do I want to say with this story, what will make it more fun to watch? What will make it a better story?" I don't think in those artistic strokes, and that's fine. They can label it anything they want to.

Over, Under, All Around



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Gordon Willis to Receive ASC Lifetime Achievement Award

The eighth recipient of the ASC's highest honor holds forth on the state of the art of filmmaking.

by David Heuring

In 1984, John Bailey, ASC, said, "For me, Gordon Willis is the preeminent American cinematographer. I think he is single-handedly responsible for the support and acknowledgment that cinematographers have now." The authors of *Masters of Light* (University of California Press, 1984), Dennis Schaefer and Larry Salvato, wrote, "Gordon Willis is the best cinematographer working in America today. Period. End of discussion."

These are subjective opinions, of course. But there is no doubt that Willis has significantly affected the evolution of both the craft and the art of cinematography. His latest honor — the ASC Lifetime Achievement Award — is another in a long line. He received Academy Award nominations for *Zelig* and *The Godfather, Part III*. The British Academy nominated Willis for their equivalent of an Oscar for his work on *Manhattan, All the President's Men* and *Zelig*. He has also won the National Society of Film Critics Award for cinematography for *The Parallax View, The Godfather, Part II* and *Pennies from Heaven*, and the New York Film Critics Award for *Zelig*.

Willis' other credits speak for themselves: *Klute, The Godfather, The Paper Chase, The Drowning Pool, Annie Hall, Interiors, Comes a Horseman, Loving, The Landlord, The Purple Rose of Cairo, Little Murders, Up the Sandbox, Stardust Memories, Broadway Danny Rose, The Money Pit*, and *Malice*.

Willis' career is a matter of record. In a recent interview, Willis was asked about his opinions on current American cinema; what follows are his typically iconoclastic responses.

AC: **The way movies are photographed has changed drastically over your career. How much of that is the result of technological advances?**

Willis: Nothing ever stays the same. Things change. Sooner or later, a different tack is taken as to how movies should proceed visually. I can't say technology has had the effect; I think point of view has changed.

By point of view you mean. . .

Willis: People's feelings about how a film should look and how it should be shot; that has changed a lot. And because of that — it's the chicken and the egg — came the demand for more definitive, easier-to-handle equipment, films that would meet the demands of more flexible filmmakers, people who want to function in a different way. I think one has fueled the other.

You're credited with helping to change that visual tack.

Willis: [With] a lot of the things I was doing, I never did them for any reason except that I liked them. I never shot something with one bulb on because I thought it was unique; I shot it that way because I thought it was right. There are other people all over the world who perceived it as unique, or horrifying, depending. But sooner or later it seeps into the business.

How was your style affected by the advances in film stocks?

Willis: At the very beginning, when I started [shooting,] I was doing it with the same film that all the flame-throwers were using, only I was using much less. And as I said, I wasn't doing it to be different. I was doing it because I liked it that way. The people I was working with were kind enough to extend themselves on my behalf.

Did you look to a previous generation of cinematographers for inspiration?

Willis: I went though a phase, like I guess everyone does, where the things that I liked were the things that I grew up with — films that were shot in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties. Many of them I found magical and inspirational. And when you first start doing things on your own, that's your point of departure. If you bake a cake, you go by the recipe that you've seen. Nothing of any great value comes out of that for you except technical proficiency. After a while, you begin to steer your own boat. And you start dropping things by the wayside, and you pick up your own paint and brushes, and soon you're doing something else.

Were you conscious of this as it was happening?

Willis: No. It was like being in a car and saying, "Let's turn down this road. This looks interesting." I never said to myself, "Previously, I would have done that, but now I'm going to do this." I look at something, I see it for what it is, and I do that.

So your counterculture reputation is wrong?

Willis: It's wrong. It might have been perceived as counterculture when the structure of Hollywood was in place. It was a form which worked very well for a lot of

people, and I don't think anyone wanted to perceive it any other way and I understand that. But I never did anything counterculture. It's the wrong perception.

You mentioned the evolution of point of view in filmmaking.

Willis: By the way, this doesn't apply to everyone. But for a lot of cinematographers, and a lot of directors as well, how they see a film, or how they want to mount a film, how they want the audience to perceive it, has changed. To be absolutely mechanical about it, you'd say, "Well, there was a certain point in the golden days of Hollywood where you'd set the keylight, set the backlight and set the fill light, according to a particular method" — and by the way, [all of that was] beautifully done. I look at those films today, and I'm in awe of them because they're so stunning, many of them.

But I've told students and I've told myself, many times, to concentrate on the purpose rather than the method of doing something. It's not really "How do I do this?" it's "What is the purpose of this?" What it should look like is based on the purpose of the scene. Now if you think that way, you're going to do things differently.

Within the context of the story, the scene will do its duty in a more efficient way?

Willis: Right. I've had this rap hung on me about dark movies. Well, I've only done several scenes in several movies that fall into that category. And they were designed that way. It's what you don't see sometimes that's just as effective as what you see. The point is that it came out of a thought process.

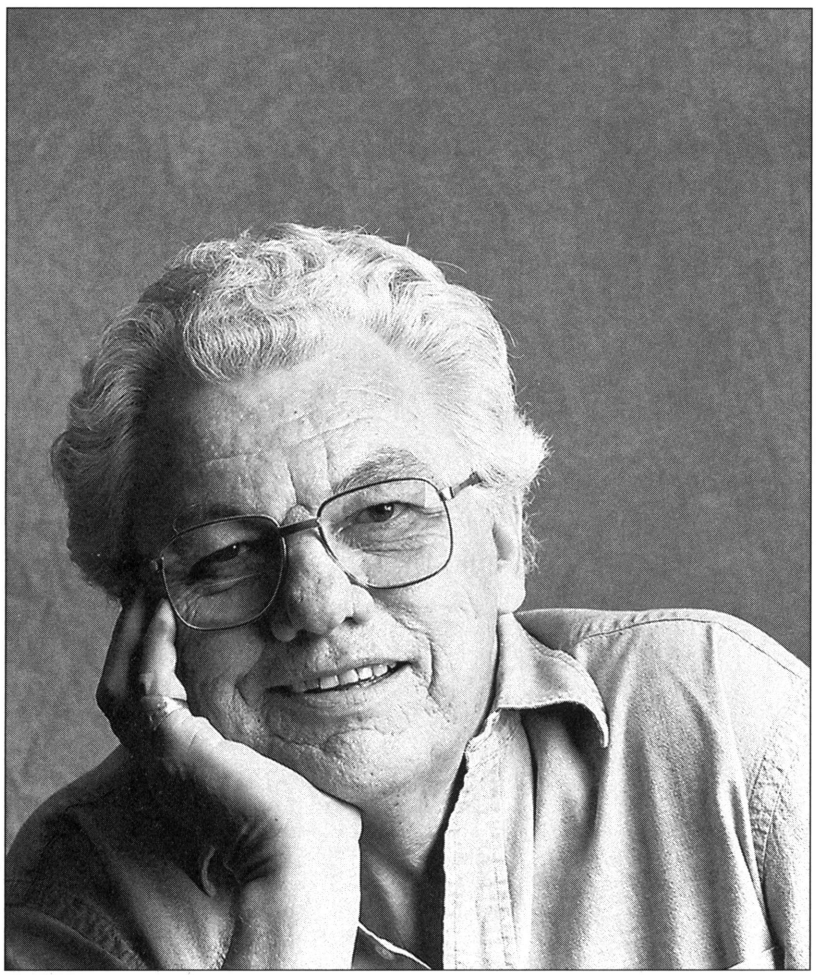


Photo by Douglas Kirkland

Has film become a more personal form of expression?

Willis: Yes. There are a lot of boutique-type movies that wouldn't have been popular earlier. I think personal expression has probably been responsible for a lot of visual changes in movies, and a lot of directorial and writing changes as well — sometimes for the good and sometimes not.

As people have become more visually sophisticated, has the role of the cinematographer become more important?

Willis: Based on economics, a cinematographer's role has become less important. I think people's sophistication about visuals applies more to special effects than good cinematography.

So the skills that come into importance are storytelling though the medium, not necessarily the ability to make a striking image.

Willis: Right. I think you're seeing less capability. There are fewer people who are able to mount a story on the screen that's actually well-defined visually and directorially. You see a lot of pie-throwing contests that are cut together and perceived as movies.

You've said that relativity is important in a good movie. What did you mean by that?

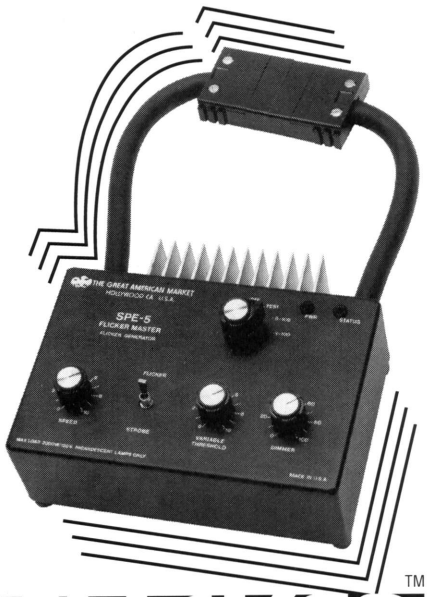
Willis: Elements in a film become interesting when they're seen in relation to each other — big and small, light and dark, good and evil. You structure your movie visually around those things, and they are what makes it fun and interesting. There's no right and wrong about what makes things work. It's just in my mind that those things work well. These things are not complicated concepts. It's just that so often they're overwhelmed by the process.

The process of making the film?

Willis: Too many people get the making of the movie confused with the movie itself. What you have to go through to make a film is far more debilitating than it ought to be.

With the evolution of technology, some say everyone will have the power to make films. What's your reaction to that?

Willis: I'm sure they will. Filmmaking in my mind has always been organic, a process that works in concert with other people.



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Some of that is going to disappear. Things are becoming homogeneous. Too many buttons. I hope they don't take all the cream off the milk — again.

What exactly do you mean by the process overwhelming the film itself?

Willis: To me, filmmaking should be this: what I like to do is come in to work with the director, set up and shoot the movie. In the scheme of things, this is not that difficult. But there is so much baggage that comes with that now, such a huge, lumbering wad that must be set in motion — the politics of decision.

> I never shot something with one bulb on because I thought it was unique; I shot it that way because I thought it was right.

And then there are movies where people hate each other, or it's difficult for some reason, and they say, "This is going to be a lousy movie." What they're talking about is not the movie, but their personal relationships within the structure of making the movie. They no longer have their eye on the ball. They have the making of the movie confused with the movie. That seriously impairs judgment.

Subtractive thinking is also very important in my mind, meaning less is better than more. You learn to take away and not add. Much of what goes on is people adding, not taking away. If something's not working, they put more on it. Generally speaking, subtractive thinking works out your problems. If something's not working, you're generally doing too much — as a cameraman or as a director or anything.

This philosophy can be applied to all areas of filmmaking?

Willis: In thinking about shooting a scene, you should decide whether it works in one cut or ten. The alternative is to just shoot everything in sight, and there's nothing left, and I'll figure it out later. This is what I call "dump-truck directing." And then you throw it in an editor's lap and he or she makes the movie — not your movie, but some movie.

Without subtractive thinking, pretty soon you get so muscle-bound that your ability to thin things out and think of things in a straightforward way is lost.

It's related to another of the major problems in the business — getting motion confused with accomplishment. It's a big, big disease. It puts everyone into a state of parade rest. You're doing a lot, but you're not accomplishing anything. It's better to make one cut that works than ten that don't. It's better to set one light that works than twenty that don't. It's better to have three fabulous words of dialogue than twenty that are lousy. It's applicable everywhere.

What do you look for in feature scripts?

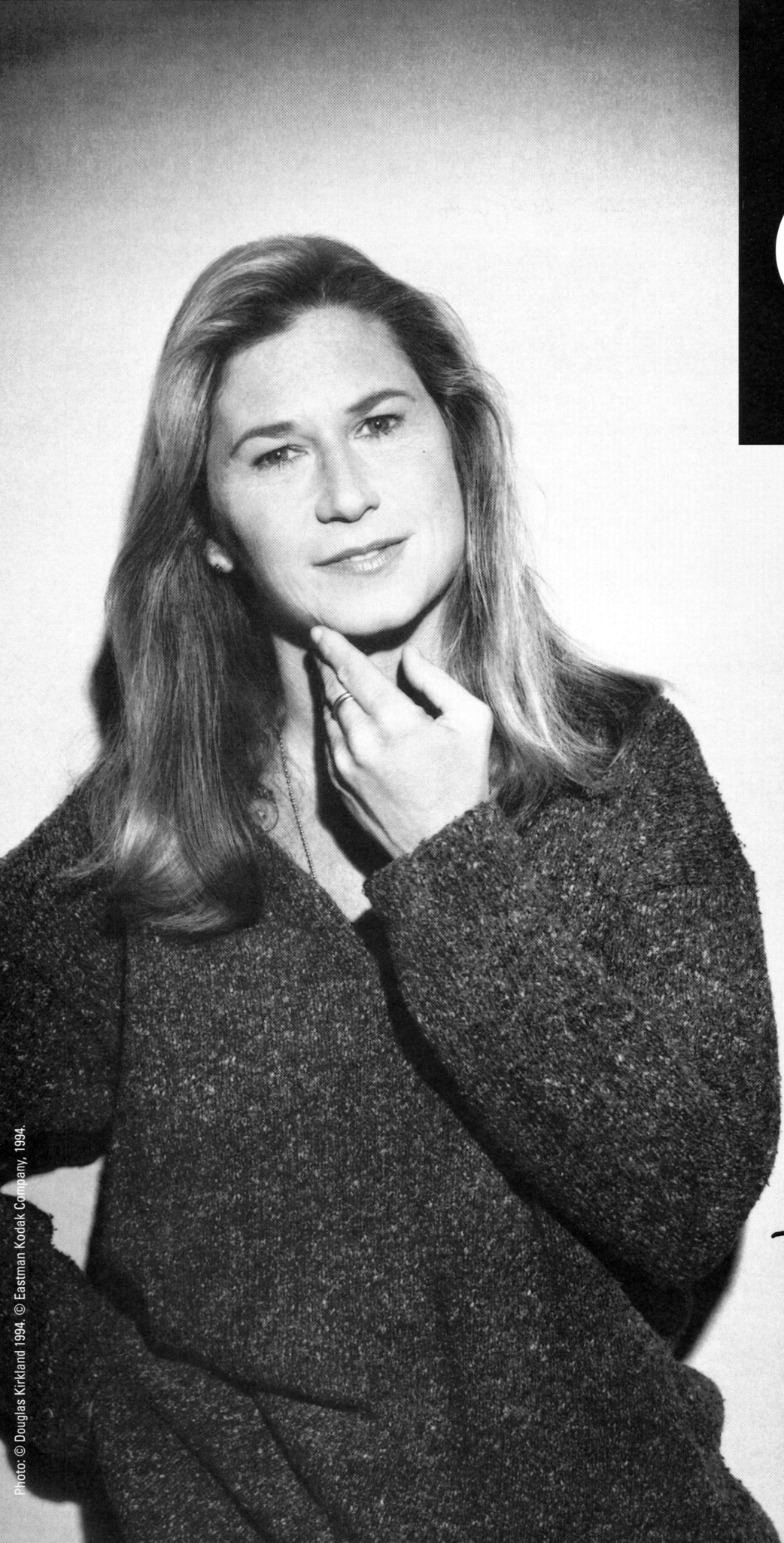
Willis: A foundation, and the right people. Sometimes the people you're working with are more important than the script.

I really would just like to find another movie that makes sense to me and shoot it. I'd like to do another period movie sometime. I always thought that in a period movie there should be a certain distance between the story and the audience. I've seen period movies where they've got the right clothes on, and they're on the right horses, but visually it looks like it was shot last week. I say to myself, "Why don't these people understand that there's something missing here?"

How do you achieve that visual distance?

Willis: It doesn't really matter how you achieve that distance. I can't tell people, "Tear the top off a box and put it over the camera and you've got it!" — which is what they want to hear. People ask, "What exactly did you do to make *Godfather* look the way it looked?" The person is stunned when I can't answer that.

The best answer I can give is that it has to do with you. You have to have some reference. But it should be interwoven within the



SANDI SISSEL ASC ON FILM

"My father was a news photographer in Paris, Texas. I started taking pictures when I was six, and was working as a photojournalist in high school. I studied music and played clarinet professionally throughout college. Music is still a big part of my inspiration. Afterwards, I shot TV news for NBC and magazines stories for '20/20' and '60 Minutes.' Travelling to so many distant locations was a great experience. I learned how to anticipate. With today's films, you can shoot in any type of light. That allows me to give the actors more freedom and bigger spaces to move in. I believe in taking risks, because I trust my instincts. I'm always happiest when someone says, 'what a great film,' instead of, 'that film looked great.' That's what makes it an art: the collaboration. I believe that the only limitation today is how far you are willing to stretch your own imagination."

Sandi Sissel

Sandi Sissel's feature and TV movie credits include "Camp Nowhere," "Salaam Bombay," "Full Eclipse," "The People Under the Stairs," "The Flash," "In the Company of Darkness," "Father's Day" and "The Drug Wars: Camarena," She also has many commercial and documentary credits.

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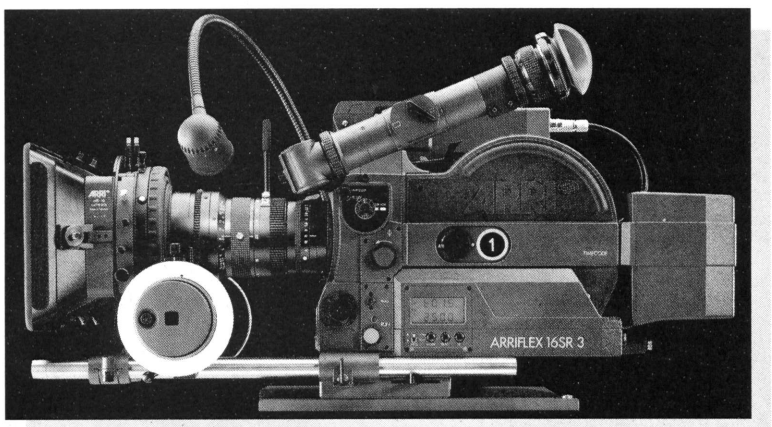

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structure of the movie. There's not one thing that you do.

I used yellow in the *Godfather* movies, a brassy kind of yellow. I just liked it. It looked right. And immediately it broke out like the plague. What people don't understand is that it's not just that element. It's everything interlinked — the wardrobe has to be right and the sets, and the photography. It all has to be right.

How can aspiring cinematographers learn that lesson?

Willis: Your job as a cinematographer is to learn as much as you can from a craft point of view. Your talent nobody can teach you, your judgment nobody can teach you. All of those things have

I used yellow in the *Godfather* movies, a brassy kind of yellow. I just liked it. It looked right. And immediately it broke out like the plague.

to be put into a mental bowl in your head. And minute by minute, hour by hour, and week by week, you're constantly sifting that and applying it to make something come out the way you think it should come out. There is nothing that is wrapped up that you take out of a box and apply on a shotgun level that will give someone the same thing in their film. You can't buy judgment.

Let's say we could go back to a set and measure everything out to the micron, to the hundredth of a footcandle, and publish it — say, in a magazine.

Willis: It doesn't matter. That wouldn't get it. It's not something that anyone can tell you. How you come up with that in any film is the definitive point of view of the director of photography. And technically you come up with it because you feel that aesthetics demand that particular technique to achieve what it is you'd like to do in the movie. And whatever that is, for that moment and that film, that's what you do. And it's

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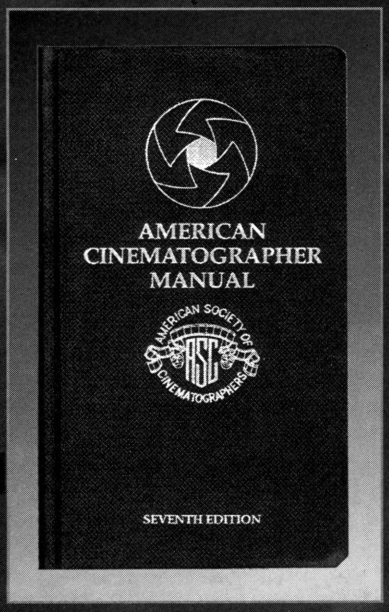

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unrepeatable, actually. You can't give it away to other people.

Your background includes many years as an camera assistant. How important is apprenticeship?

Willis: One thing about experience: it's very hard to tell other people what to do, and get the most out of them, if you don't know what they do. If you don't understand the relationship between what you're doing and what the people around you are doing, you can be behind the 8-ball.

I do believe in apprenticeship. I was an AC for a long time, and when I started shooting, I was doing it on the East Coast, which meant that I could operate and shoot at the same time, which gave me an advantage in that I could learn a little faster. I think there should be more apprenticeship within the structure of the entire business.

You mentioned in an interview around the time of the first two *Godfather* movies that you expose the negative in a manner that protects the image from overzealous lab "improvement."

Willis: I used to cut it closer, but I was depending on repeatability. That's not there anymore. Repeatability is what the labs used to offer, and I don't think they're as careful as they used to be. I think a lot of pull-processing goes on, and they skimp on replenishing. I don't think the process of manufacturing film is that finite anymore, either. If you factor in the variables, they multiply each other, and that's no good. I can no longer hold negatives in a narrow range of exposure to prevent printing options. There is a certain dependability that's no longer with us.

What do you think of the current tournament of explosives in action filmmaking?

Willis: The things you have to do to get people's attention in a movie theater today is almost ludicrous. Explosions, killing and sex — those three things. If you knock down all the walls, and you can see everything, the excitement, mystery, romance and magic are gone. And they may be reaching that point. It's like eating too much chocolate.

There is a percentage of the human race that still wants to see well-done films. And when it shows up they go. But this business of "every frame must burn" — I think there's a balance to be found somewhere.

What can a person do?

Willis: Speak up. Voice your opinion. Be true to the good stuff and remember, as Longfellow wrote, "the supreme excellence is simplicity."

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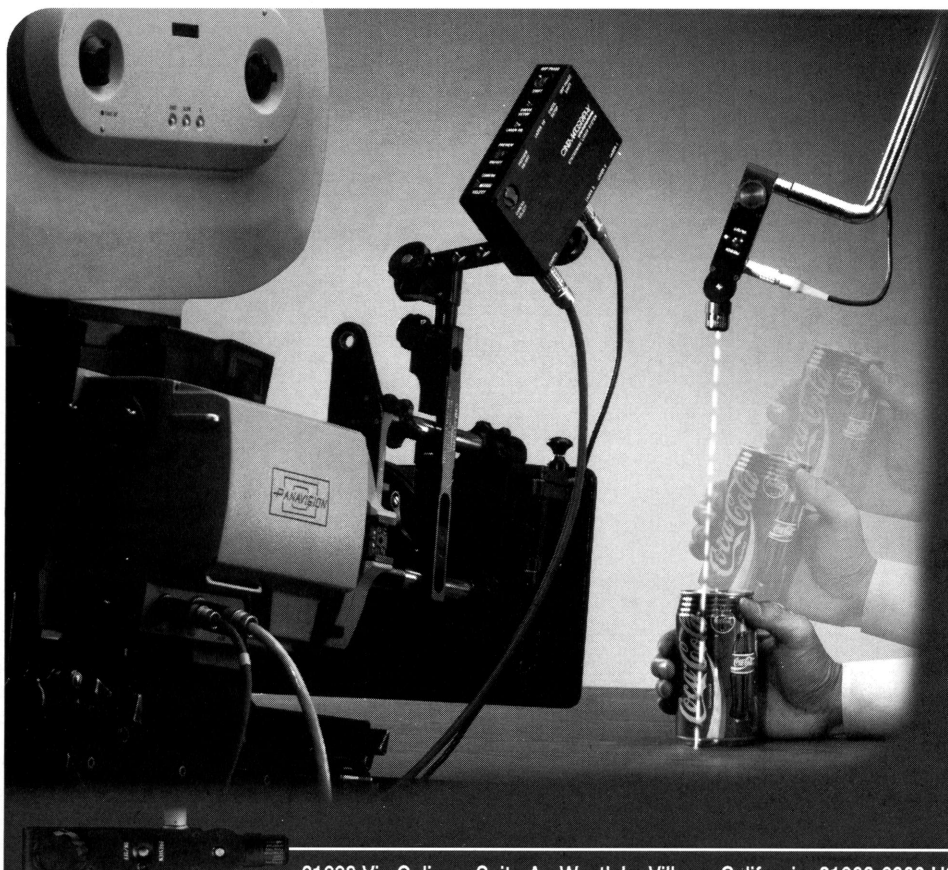

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Rafting Down *The River Wild*

Filming mighty rivers in Montana and Oregon requires ingenuity, inventiveness and determination.

by Brooke Comer

Montana's Smith River is remote, beautiful and dangerous. According to writer/fly-fisherman Denis O'Neill, whose article for *Fly, Rod & Reel* magazine inspired *The River Wild*, "Once you get on that river, you can't get off. You have to travel the length of it."

The film, like the Smith river, is a nonstop, adrenaline-pumping roller coaster. The story is simple. Gail Hartman (Meryl Streep) grew up navigating the river's treacherous rapids. Now, in an effort to salvage her troubled marriage, Gail takes her husband and son (David Straithairn, Joseph Mazello) on a whitewater rafting expedition. When they meet Wade (Kevin Bacon) and Terry (John C. Reilly), danger is suddenly personified.

Most of the film was shot on location on two rivers: Montana's Kootenai and Oregon's Rogue. While in Montana, the production became the first ever to film on the Kootenai Indians' sacred ground. The tribe allowed the filming on the condition that the exact location of the sacred grounds not be revealed.

Initially, Universal executives had targeted Idaho's Payette River for its accessibility, but director Curtis Hanson felt that the Payette wasn't visually exciting enough for the film he'd envisioned. Production designer Bill Kenney scouted rivers around the country before finding the Kootenai, whose rocks and crags made for difficult access but provided the sense of foreboding necessary to turn sublime nature into a force of evil.

Despite the complexities of shooting on a river that roared with whitewater, cinematographer Robert Elswit says the production's success resulted less from sophisticated technology than from basic filmmaking know-how. "In a way, this multimillion-dollar picture was successful thanks to simple good sense and good grip work," he submits. Grip Gary Dagg brought his experience as a car photographer to the project. Says Elswit, "He approached shooting off the raft as if we were shooting driving shots with cars. He built aluminum speedrail structures that allowed us to put the camera anywhere we wanted."

Hanson and Elswit knew they wanted to shoot in a widescreen format. The question was whether to use Super 35 or anamorphic, and anamorphic won. "Theoretically, Super 35 allows you to work at wider stops, with more depth of field," notes Elswit. "The tradeoff is the loss in resolution from blowing up for release print. We didn't want to make the tradeoff. We were willing to live with anamorphic lenses. We went for the biggest negative. Because it's an outdoor movie and we were looking at wide shots, grain structure would be more apparent."

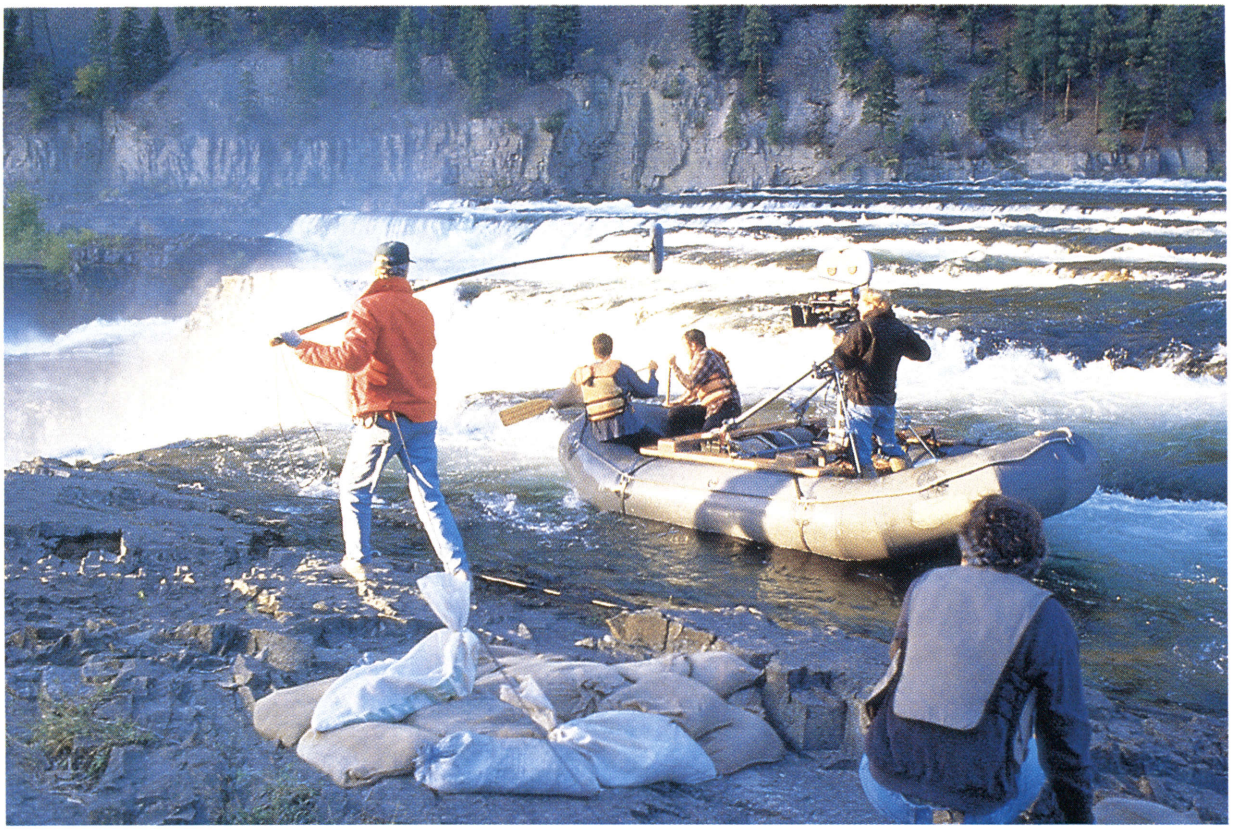
Once the decision was made to shoot anamorphic, a Panaflex Platinum, two Panaflex GII's, a Panastar and a Pan-Arri III camera were chosen for the job. Under the rough and wet conditions, Elswit worried about having enough lenses on hand. He worried less about light. Anamorphic lenses can be slower, but most of the scenes were outdoor exteriors. "We were lucky," he recalls. "We didn't break anything."

Thankfully, that list of unbroken items included bones: while figuring out how to place cameras in various locations to shoot the perilous "Gauntlet" sequence that climaxes the film, the crew had to scale rock walls. For that sequence alone, camera placement became the great adventure of the film, with grips and camera assistants up to their necks in freezing water or tied to slippery rocks. Crew members would plunge into the icy rapids while cameras were anchored above on jutting rocks and on platforms that extended off cliffs above the water. Additional cameras were attached to amphibious camera operators and grips.

Several anamorphic movies were in production when *The River Wild* began ordering equipment; *Wyatt Earp* and other big features had already cornered the market on anamorphic lenses. "We got some older lenses, because not everything was available," says Elswit. He tested the E and C series and wound up using both. "With anamorphic lenses, it's important that you do extensive tests," he says. "Each focal length is different, and the contrast is different, so of course they perform differently. There's a certain amount of barrel distortion. You have to get familiar with them to figure out how much

Opposite: ***Meryl Streep (in foreground) watches as crew members set up a precarious perch to film some whitewater action.***
This page: ***Waist-deep in Montana's Kootenai River, director Hanson (with beard) and the camera crew line up a shot.***

Photos by Neil Leifer and Melissa Moseley, courtesy of Universal



A two-shot at the edge of the falls. Elswit attributes the film's safe and successful completion to "simple good sense and good grip work."

you can live with. You want to feel good about what you can anticipate."

Elswit did extensive lens tests, using Primos as well as E- and C-series lenses. "Phil Radin at Panavision told me there were no Primos available for the shoot. I tested them anyway to compare them to the E series." He tested the lenses by shooting against the backlit Pacific ocean at the beach at Malibu late one afternoon, with hot highlights "to see the worst flare problems I could imagine running into. I learned a lot and it helped me out later, in the dead-hot backlight reflections off the river water. I felt comfortable with the fact that I'd be using the E series; Primos take the flare somewhat better, but the E's are outstanding. The C's were good too; some of them are very old." Elswit chose three 50-500mm T-5.6 anamorphic zooms, a 40-200mm T-4.5/4.8 zoom, and a 120mm Canon lens. His selection from the E series ranged from 35-180mm, and from 30-100mm with the C series.

Elswit was given an entire set of C and E lenses along with four zooms. He shot most of the action sequences with zooms, because they gave him more flexibility, but for the non-action part of the film, he stuck with prime lenses. "The zooms were oftentimes too slow. I'd have loved to have used the zooms more, but we just didn't have enough light. We couldn't always put the cameras where we wanted."

During the shooting months, September and October, days were shorter, which meant there was less light, and the water was freezing. The other complication, access, threatened to become the driving force of the production. "The only way to get to most of the locations was by helicopter or jet boat," Elswit testifies. "Cliff Barrow did an extraordinary job organizing the helicopter service. That crew made it possible for us to work efficiently. Bridges were built to get to islands, but helicopter was the only feasible way to deliver equipment. The camera, grip and electrical equipment was delivered in slingloads hung beneath the helicopters and slowly lowered to the ground. Because Barrow and his team did such a great job, it was less of a problem for Curtis and me. We didn't have to worry that the nightmare of getting there was going to take over."

The hardest part of the movie, for the director of photography, was the fact that almost all of it was shot on water. "Nobody's ever quite shot this way," he reflects. "In *Deliverance* [shot by Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC], there's one dialogue scene in a canoe, but the rest of the time the canoe is in an action sequence, or the actors are on shore. Our problem was that almost half the dialogue scenes in the movie are on a floating raft. The problems are maintaining continuity with shifting backgrounds and changing water levels. It's not like shooting out in the ocean, where all the water looks alike." Making subsequent takes or setups meant going back upriver, and in some locations, this could only be done by helicopter.

Making things tougher was the fact that there was no turning back on the Kootenai River. During prep, Elswit and his crew found out they couldn't go back upstream unless they were plucked by helicopter. This could have been a big problem if it weren't for the troubleshooting river unit, led by John Wasson and Moby Griffin. Wasson, a 25-year

veteran rafter and kayaker, had previously supervised whitewater and safety support on *A River Runs Through It*.

Wasson's group helped the crew make pontoon rafts, 4' X 8' platforms with wire mesh decks. These rafts, which essentially functioned like camera cars powered by outboard motors, could be lashed together and used to haul the gear and cameras. Outfitted with specially designed struts on which to mount cameras, the resulting camera barge, with its key lights, cameras, C-stands and day-glo life jackets, floated downriver.

But each float had its own set of problems. At times, the strength of the water exceeded the power of the outboard motors. "We needed smooth water to shoot float scenes, and dialogue was impossible," says Elswit, who admits that most of the film was looped. "We'd bang apart. We needed slow water, and even flat water moved quickly. The river unit people were trying to control the direction so we wouldn't wash ashore. Sometimes it had the feeling of a wild nightmare."

Underwater cabling constructed by rigger Michael Weiss and his team kept the talent and crew safe despite the proximity of rapids and falls. "We'd shoot the actors approaching the dangerous areas, but they couldn't get too close," says Elswit. When a raft went through the rapids, two rafts were set up for the scene. A grip raft rigged with a waterproofed video assist wired to the camera recorded the action, allowing Hanson and Elswit to see Streep going through the rapids. "We did as much as we could to keep the stars from any real danger. When we shot a close-up in the raft through whitewater, there were people in kayaks behind or ahead in case anyone fell out, which did happen."

Even with raft control and safety kayaks, rafts could only go a certain distance before getting too close to big rapids or falls. The river can push the raft under falls and hold it down, making it impossible for the person in the boat to get to the surface. "It's called the 'Maytag effect,'" says Elswit. "The force of the water holds you under so you can't escape."

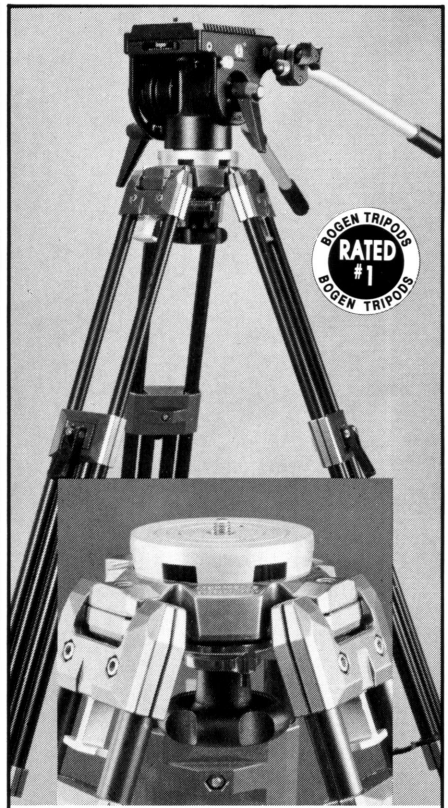
Mike Hoover, one of the river unit's cameramen and a world-renowned mountain climber, was responsible for getting a crucial whitewater scene in which the characters tackle difficult rapids by dangling from a cable over the river — a technique that became known as "the Hoover Dangle." "In climbing movies, the risk is evident," says Hoover. "Everyone knows you could fall. It's our job to reveal not only the river's beauty, but its potential danger and its power. The best way to do that is be as close to the water as possible."

Not everyone wanted to be that close to the water. B-camera operator Kim Marks nearly suffered an accident while shooting on a platform built over the river to get shots over rough, unraftable water. The platform Marks stood on collapsed over a major "hole," a deadly part of the river. Fortunately, Marks was harnessed, and merely wound up dangling before being helped back to shore. "It was like going to Outward Bound camp," Elswit observes.

Despite the realistic footage, the cast did not do their own stunts, and experts always took over in the danger zones. "It became a first unit-second unit thing," Elswit explains. "Stunt people always went over the lips of drops." At the most dangerous points, when not even a stunt person could navigate a fall, helicopters pulled stuntpeople out of rafts in harnesses, and the wires were digitally removed.

There were some minor accidents, visible in dailies, that Elswit says "ended up enhancing the film." During one scene in which Streep's character navigates Bacon and Reilly through heavy rapids, an oar was sucked into the whitewater. When it surfaced, it slammed Reilly's stunt double in the throat. That incident inspired Hanson to work a scene around it.

The scene in which Kevin Bacon's character falls from the boat was also a real accident that occurred before the scene was written. When Bacon's stunt double took the fall, Hanson decided to incorporate the moment into the film. Says Elswit, "It looked really



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In a carefully executed stunt (note the wire which has helped upend the raft), a stuntman is tossed into the river. The production saw its share of minor mishaps during shooting, but several such moments were simply incorporated into the film to add realism.

good, and there was no way we could fake it as well as it really happened." He reflects, "Thirty years ago, all of the close-ups in the raft going through the rapids would have been shot with rear projection." Hanson opted to do as much with real actors as he could without endangering their lives.

Toward the end of the production, when the water was low enough, rafts were rigged below less dangerous falls. "We could shoot from 30 feet away and pan and zoom, so that while the rafts were static, the combination of pan and zoom created an illusion of movement." But the rafts were also hit by ice-cold water for hours. "That's when it got old," says Elswit, who notes that the production attempted to fend off hypothermia by creating makeshift "hot tubs" out of aluminum cattle-feed tubs filled with water.

Costume supervisor Christopher Lawrence got some lessons from the river unit too. Because it doesn't dry quickly, cotton has become known as "the death fabric." Lawrence learned that nylon, neoprene and other synthetics were safer and more comfortable. But even quick-drying fabrics couldn't keep the crew warm in freezing water. "Even with wetsuits under their clothes, the actors froze," Elswit remembers.

Elswit's lighting package included the standard trio of 12Ks ("in case we broke one") and plenty of extra batteries. "We had a generator in the jet boat, and in certain locations on the Rogue, but when we were floating, we relied on nothing bigger than 4Ks and batteries." In overcast weather, he used light to give shape to faces. "The few times I didn't, I was unhappy," he says. During scenes shot in rapids, Elswit used a sun gun. Despite the violent force of the water, nothing was damaged except for a spray deflector.

Elswit found his task to be mainly one of controlling light rather than generating it. The baseball hat that Streep wore solved a lot of problems. "Overcast toplight can be wildly unflattering," he points out. Elswit was pleased when Streep chose to wear a hat thoughout the movie.

Elswit used Kodak's 5245 stock for the picturesque opening, in contrast to the second part of the film, after the family is kidnapped. When the mood changed, Elswit switched to 5248. "I told people I was doing it for artistic reasons, but it was really because I didn't have enough light," he quips.

Long after the locations had been locked in, an environmental group in Oregon objected to the production's use of the Lower Rogue, which was near warehouses that offered space for large sets to be built. "Much to the chagrin of the local businesses, we lost a major series of locations," Elswit remembers.

Some of the "outdoor" scenes are deceptive; the birthday party scene, which appears to take place on the riverbank, was shot partially on a set. The warehouse wasn't big enough to build a larger set. "We used the stage to do tight close-ups, and for obvious night interiors or wide shots, we'd shoot on location." But scenes inside a tent, shots of Straithairn's character on a rock, and tight shots of Bacon with a gun were all shot on a stage. To get wide shots of Streep bathing in the river, the crew dammed up a stream and heated it. But the tight shots of her reactions were filmed in a makeshift pool on the stage.

Elswit credits Hanson for pulling off such an ambitious project. "The logistical problems of the movie were overwhelming, but Curtis stayed calm throughout. He was always able to concentrate on the most important thing, which was telling the story.

"We were constantly scrambling up wet rocks and plunging into icy water. We all had three kinds of shoes. We had wet suits, dry suits, and every kind of outdoor gear made. It was the most physically demanding show I could imagine. The grips, camera assistants and electricians never gave up. I lost 20 pounds. It didn't seem like fun at the time, but now, in retrospect, it does."

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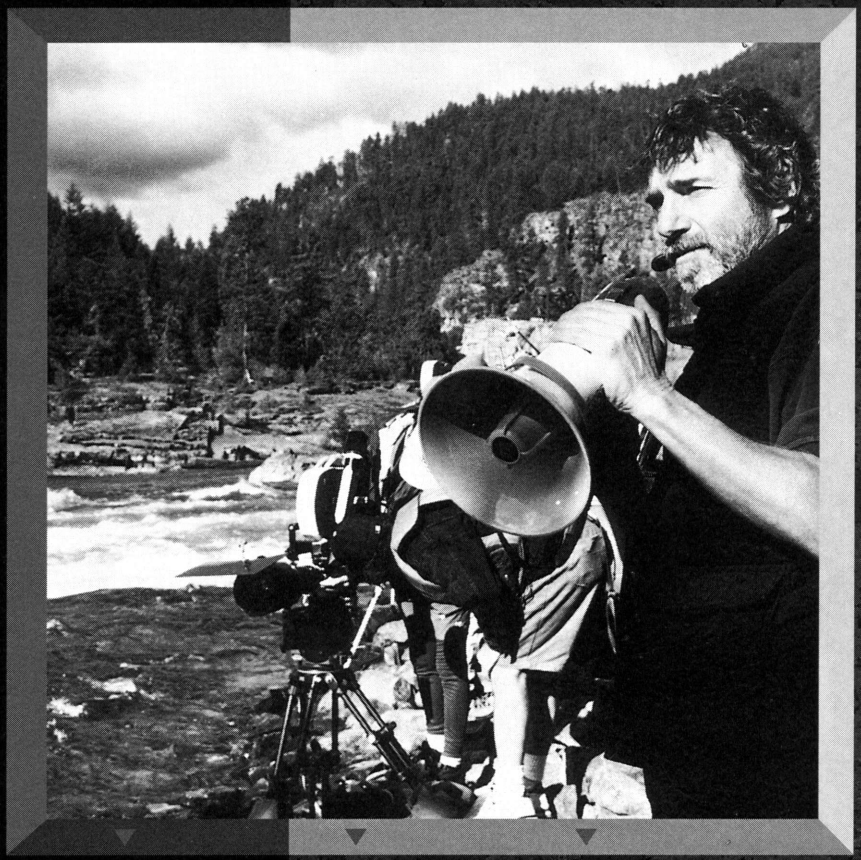

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Roswell: The Truth is Elusive

On location in Arizona, filmmakers shed light on the mystery shadowing the small town of Roswell, New Mexico.

by Chris Probst

Photos by Kelvin Jones, courtesy of Showtime and Paul Davids

Major Jesse Marcel (Kyle MacLachlan) and Sherman Carson (Xander Berkeley) survey the crash scene. The wreckage field was photographed with a subjective point of view and a documentary feel.

With eyes cast toward the heavens, many have contemplated the possibilities of life beyond our tiny speck of light on the outskirts of the Milky Way. But are there eyes that look back in reply?

The reported crash of a UFO on June 14, 1947 at the Brazel Ranch near Roswell, New Mexico generated skepticism, fear, curiosity, and an international media flurry, but also raised suspicions of government cover-ups, conspiracies and alien invasions. Reports sang of a salvaged spaceship, recovered extraterrestrial life forms and derelict weather balloons.

To this day, none of these stories has been proven. But with the airing of *Roswell* on Showtime last July, director Jeremy Kagan and cinematographer Steven Poster, ASC joined together to lay a few pieces of the puzzle in place.

Produced by Ilene Kahn and Kagan, the picture aligns itself with the story of Air Force intelligence officer Major Jessie Marcel (played by Kyle MacLachlan), who reports to the media his strange findings among the debris of what was believed to be the wreckage of a UFO.

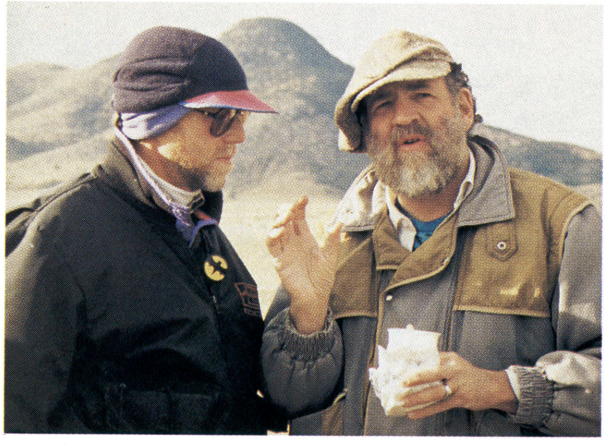
An official military statement substantiates Marcel's findings of a downed UFO, but Marcel's account is hastily contradicted by his superiors. Marcel is discredited and the military powers make him the scapegoat for the ostensible misinformation. For the rest of Marcel's life, he is haunted by the untold events that transpired at Roswell.

To reveal *Roswell's* conspiratorial air and paranormal mystique photographically, Poster set out to illuminate the film's many layers of complexity: the military cover-ups, the media feeding frenzy, the lifestyle of rural New Mexico in 1947, and the unveiling of alien life.

"We started our investigation of the interpretations of *Roswell* many months before the project was even a reality, and when we did get a green light, we formalized our discussions," says Poster, a longtime friend and filmmaking collaborator of Kagan's. "When we knew that we wanted to develop different styles for the various parts of the film, I faxed Jeremy a long memo which was essentially a menu of possibilities for each section as we broke them down. Jeremy then faxed me back some of his choices. From these ideas I began to develop directions for the seven chosen styles — and variations within each style."

The production proceeded with a restricted budget and an ac-

Left: ***Local radio reporter Frank Joyce (Bob Gunton) interviews rancher Mac Brazel (Dwight Yoakum), who discovered the wreckage. Poster used a 4K Par in a Chimera Softlight over the table.***
Below: ***Poster (left) and director Jeremy Kagan.***



celerated shooting schedule. "Some of the styles were still somewhat vague when we started to shoot," recalls Poster. "I wasn't given any test time to speak of, so we had to rely on experience to proceed. As it always happens, some of our ideas changed because we were testing as we went."

Poster drew up style breakdown sheets to communicate these ideas with Kagan and his crew. "I made these style sheets available to all of the department heads so that we all knew which style was being attempted in each case. Some problems arose when the production company got hold of these style sheets and became nervous about how far-out we wanted to go in some areas. I remember several long sessions trying to explain to the Showtime executives what it all meant. I don't like keeping secrets. I generally like having everybody know what I am going to do."

The unweaving of the *Roswell* riddle begins in modern-day (1977) New Mexico, with Jessie Marcel's arrival at the 30-year reunion of the 509th Bomb Group — to the surprise of his fellow retired military comrades. Marcel's estrangement from his peers becomes readily apparent beneath the otherwise idyllic canvas of homecoming and patriotism.

For the scenes taking place in 1977, the cinematographer chose to emphasize the underlying ambience of danger and untold secrets. He and Kagan decided to cover the present-day scenes with long focal-length lenses ranging from 200mm to 400mm, to compress the area around Marcel and give him a sense of being trapped, closed in by his surroundings and the people around him. Poster labelled the approach "Style 1A."

To depict the original events surrounding the alleged crash in 1947, a series of flashbacks from Marcel's point of view were used. This switch in the narrative viewpoint marked for Poster a need to shift visual styles — hence Style 2A.

Style 2A was planned as an immediate, reality-based, documentary look, using handheld or bungee-mounted cameras to provide a subjective perspective. Additionally, Kagan chose wide-angle lenses for these scenes to give more scope to the compositions, allowing the viewer freedom to explore the scenes and take in the details as if they were witnessing the investigation first-hand.

As a variation on Style 2A, Style 2B — also from the point of view of Marcel but containing events that Marcel has heard about second-hand — used a more conventional approach in terms of

Above: ***The main street of Bisbee, Arizona, dressed as Roswell, New Mexico. Poster used a "#4 or 5" UltraCon and a 1/2 ProMist to knock down the extreme contrast.*** **Right:** ***Secretary Forrestal (Eugene Roche) approaches a top secret door, behind which he'll encounter an emissary from a distant land.***

camera movement and point of view.

A critical shot representative of these two styles launches the story. Directly following the opening titles' documentary montage, a blurred POV rushes toward a hanger at night. This shot, for Kagan, was instrumental in acclimating the audience to the concept of switching perspectives and visual styles.

"From the beginning," Poster explained, "this shot would serve as a flag that there are things coming later that are not 'normal.' We created the shot in black & white with the idea that we were going to do some manipulation of the image, in effect telling the audience that this is not your normal linear material."

To achieve the desired blurred effect, the shot was captured at 6 fps with a Steadicam hard-mounted to an Apollo crane equipped with pneumatic tires. "We moved right on the Tarmac without track," Poster recounts. "Hard-mounting a Steadicam on anything is a great way to shoot. We also mounted it on an insert car for the driving shots at the debris field."

To compensate for the subsequent change in exposure due to the slow film rate, Poster elected to vary the aperture rather than the shutter, imparting to the images a degree of blur which, when multiple-frame printed,

would be back to real-time but with an eerie, staccato effect. "We wanted the burned-out look," adds Poster, "so we duped onto high-con stock to increase the grain and contrast."

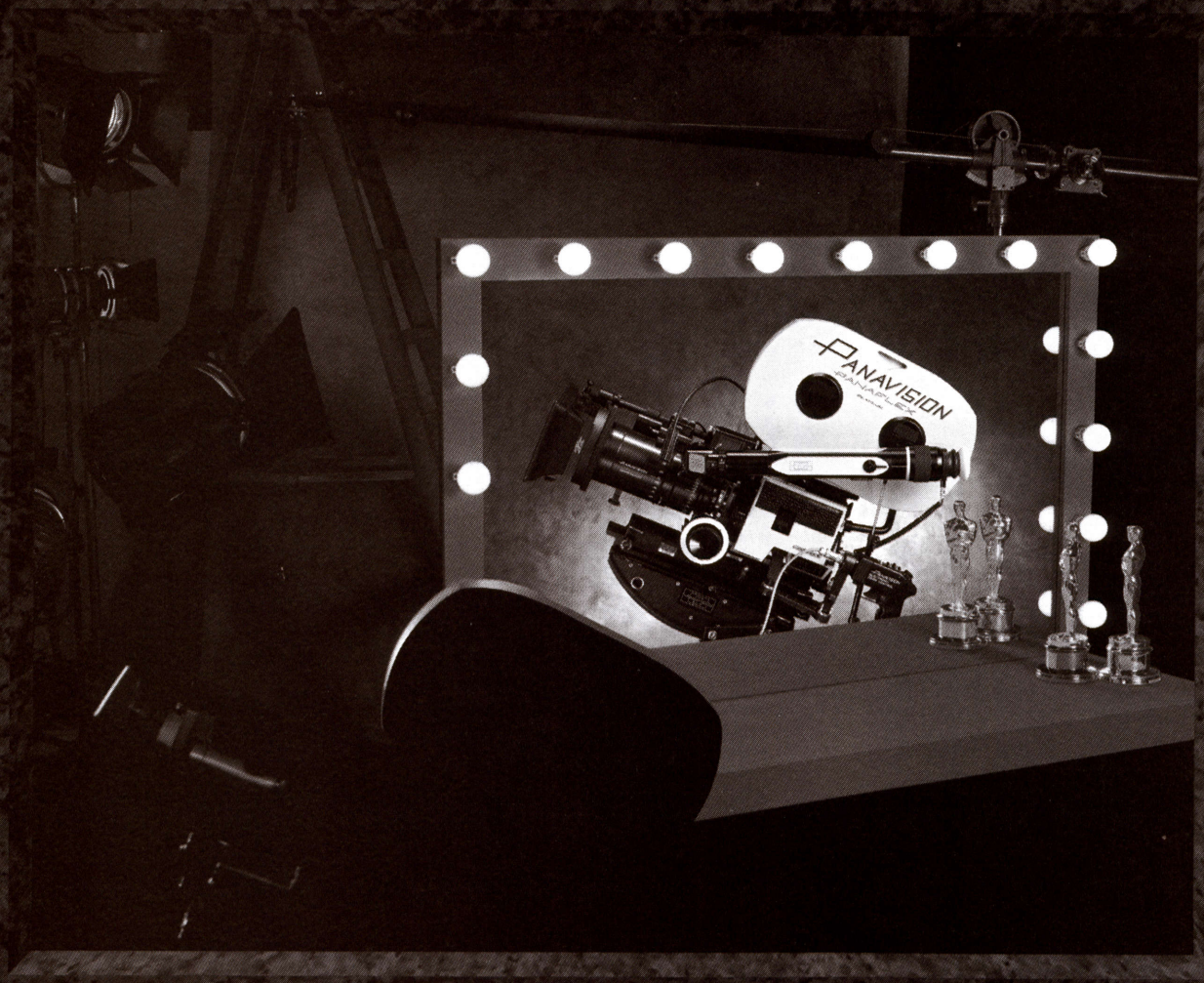
Lending further credibility to the recollections of Marcel, *Roswell* also relates the experiences of Frank Joyce (Bob Gunton), a local radio reporter who is drawn into the episode. Joyce covers the breaking news of the UFO findings, interviews Mac Brazel, the rancher who discovered the wreckage, and then follows the hopscotch coverup of the military press releases in the days that follow.

The scenes recounting Joyce's memories, Style 3A, reveal Joyce's cool, controlled perspective on the situations he encounters. Poster employed Eastman's 5296 tungsten-balanced stock for the interiors, which were lit with HMIs. "We wanted this section to be very cold and contrasty. So instead of using an 85 filter in the camera I used an 85C which corrects 600 degrees cooler than an 85B filter. No smoke was used in the radio station because the old school auditorium in which it was shot was so drafty we couldn't keep the smoke in the room."

Joyce's account of Mac Brazel's interrogation, Style 3B, although not directly witnessed by Joyce, stays with the cooler look of Style 3A, but instead of using the 85C to correct the color temperature to 3800 degrees, no correction was used. "The interrogation was shot in the same place, but was heavily smoked because we were able to put up a Duvateen barrier to block out the daylight coming in and contain the smoke," reveals Poster. "This scene was to be bluer. To accomplish that I removed the 85 and used HMIs. Actually, there was only one light used for the entire scene: a 4K Par in a daylight senior Chimera Soft Light hanging straight down over the table. Except for an occasional white show card, I let the smoke do the rest."

For the exteriors in Joyce's recollections, Poster had a trickier situation at hand. "The main street in Bisbee was very narrow; it was winter, low-in-the-sky light, and the street faced east to west. That meant that hard sunlight would hit the buildings down the street in the morning, but in the afternoon it would go behind a mountain and the whole street would be in shadow. I was hoping for overcast, but had no luck, so we had to schedule the shots for the morning. Some of the background was as much as five stops over key!"

To control the extreme contrast of the scene, a #4 or #5 UltraCon filter was combined with a ½ ProMist. "We snuck in some fill from several 4K Pars bounced off Griffolyns hidden behind the camera in the alley. We also put up a 12' X 12' Griffolyn on a building across



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Above: ***For the reunion scenes, Poster and Kagan sought to graphically represent Marcel's ostracization.*** **Right:** ***Lewis Rickett (Peter MacNicol) and Marcel dance with their wives at the reunion.***

the street to enlarge the shade on the street as the sun came around. I did have the ability to pull the stop because we were on a Steadicam, so with all of this you can bet that I couldn't wait to get to dailies the next day. It all worked great. 5296 is a very strong emulsion, especially in the high end; the contrast held and even enhanced the emotional quality of those sequences."

Style 4, from the perspective of Ricketts — a peer of Marcel's in 1947 — was approached in similar fashion to Style 2A, except that Poster chose to use more Steadicam, jib-arm or dollies for steadier movement to convey Rickett's easygoing mentality.

As Marcel further investigates the incident that has troubled him and his family for the last 30 years, he uncovers in his discussions several events that further confirm his suspicions. However, a meeting with MacIntyre, Stanton and Harris — three witnesses from the cleanup crew of the crash site — lends more doubt and confusion than solid testimonial evidence of a military cover-up. The scenes relating the inconsistent accounts of these men, rendered in Style 5, were all shot in black & white on Eastman 5222 Double-X stock.

To filmically realize the reports of MacIntyre and Stanton, which involved moving shots inside a single engine airplane and in the back of a military cargo truck, Poster employed the economical "poor man's process" shot to convey the sense of movement when there was none. "The poor man's process shots were fun to do. They were shot on the tarmac at Van Nuys airport with two guys shaking the plane from the wings. We also had the camera mounted on a Panatate to add to the sense of movement. A 4K Par for sunlight was mounted on a small stage crane and moved up and down to simulate the plane banking." The poor man's shot in the back of the truck was similarly achieved, but incorporated the horizon-line of a nearby field as the backdrop.

For the sixth style in the film, the POV of a local mortician called to deliver caskets to the military base, the cinematographer elected to push the 5296 stock one stop in order to increase the grain and create a more contrasty look. "I got some contrast," he says, "but not much grain. When film is pushed one stop I know from past testing that you don't get one full stop increase in EI. So I rate the film as a ⅔ stop push so that the printer lights can match where I would print the whole film. This keeps the blacks in the print consistent. Because of the decent density of the negative, not much grain is seen at 800 EI. This is another tribute to the 5290 series of films."

Perhaps the most challenging and bold of the styles created for *Roswell* was the director of photography's final approach to image rendering, Style 7. In the film, Marcel is approached by a mysterious figure (Martin Sheen) known only by the assumed name Townsand. In confidence, Townsand reveals to Marcel the hidden facts surrounding Roswell and also discloses more information about other intriguing events.

Poster's imagination was in full swing when he tackled the chore of bringing the unknown to light.

For Townsand's account of the stories concerning the government's efforts to conceal information on alien encounters, Poster examined several possibilities to render a different look. He chose to degrade the imagery — visually stating that the scenes depicted are not as solid or substantiated as those previous — by utilizing the technique of color desaturation.

Originally, Kagan and Poster wanted to photograph Style 7 in Hi8 video, but nervous executives meant other avenues had to be explored.

"Even though the test of the Hi8 video looked pretty good, we were told that we couldn't af-

ford the transfers to film for the sequence. Because we were going to do a film print for a European theatrical release, we needed to end up on film. So we made the compromise and shot on film. But because we wanted to screw up the image 'to the max,' we weren't sure where to go. Both Jeremy and I knew that it would have to be done in the print. We wanted to give it a start, so the shooting concept became cold, diffused and desaturated with strange movement. We ended up using a simple desaturation technique of printing a high-con black & white internegative and optically printing both negatives. Giving more exposure to the black & white element desaturates the image more. It was the simple solution that we needed in order to impart the emotional feeling Jeremy and I were looking for."

Under the general heading of Style 7, Townsand tells several different tales. Each required a slightly different treatment visually. The details behind the alien autopsy were photographed in Style 7A. "There was a great deal of smoke in the autopsy room, " Poster recalls. "The KinoFlo bulbs were daylight-balanced and we used an 85C on the camera. It was shot handheld in a very small room with a lot of people. I also had heavy double-fog filters on."

Style 7B was used for Townsand's report of a secret committee appointed by the President to address the issue of extraterrestrial contact, which was shot on location in the L.A. County Museum of Art. "The roundtable discussion scene posed several interesting problems," recalls Poster. "No hot lights could be used, nothing could be hung, no bulbs could be changed, and certainly no smoke could be used. We only had half a day to get in and out. On the scout, Jeremy gave me my choice of two different galleries. I chose the one with a big skylight and decided to use several free-standing four-bulb KinoFlos, mixed with the tungsten lights on the paintings and the daylight from the ceiling. The camera was mounted on a Weaver/ Steadman articulated jib arm with a rolling head, so we could do our moving Dutch angles. Because I

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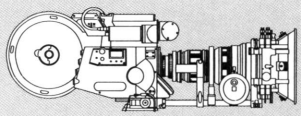

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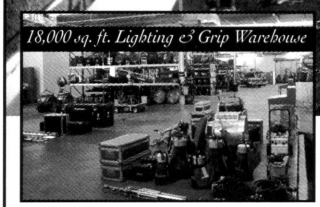

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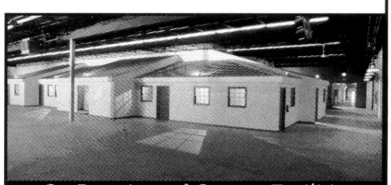

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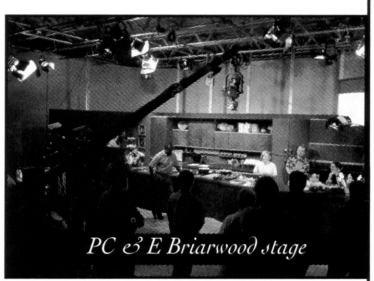

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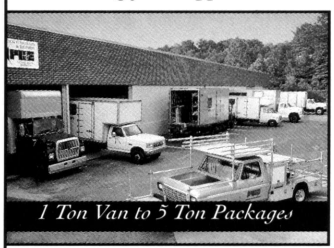

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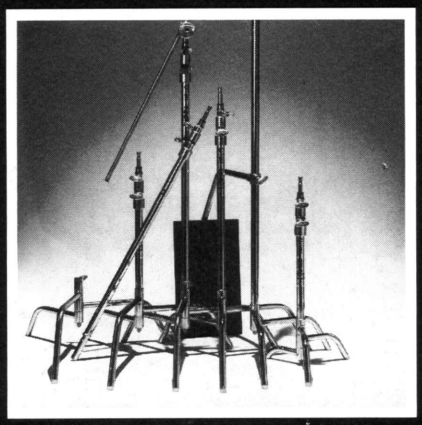

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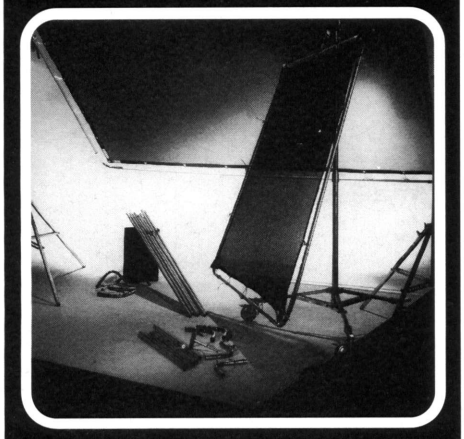

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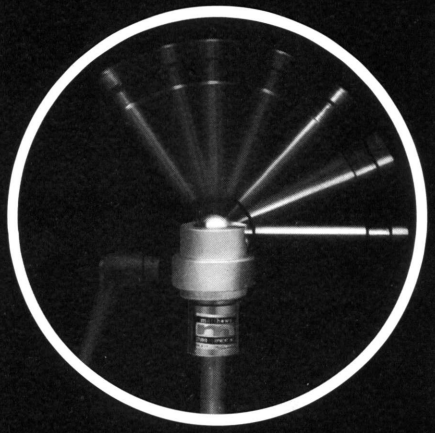

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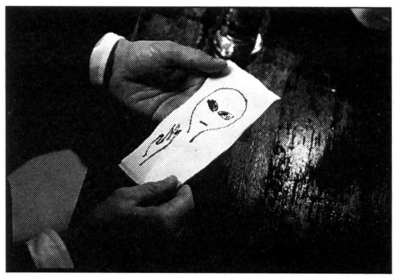
Right: ***Carson and Marcel discuss events thirty years on at the reunion.*** **Below right:** ***A sketch of an "alien."*** **Opposite page:** ***Surgeons prepare the visitor for autopsy.***



was at the mercy of the daylight and couldn't use any kind of physical diffusion in the room, the diffusion became a #1 ProMist and a #2 double fog, and a very full exposure was used to help wash the surfaces."

Style 7C involved the disclosure of information about the legendary myth of Area 51, where the government allegedly held a recovered EBE (Extraterrestrial Biological Entity) captive. The exterior of the entrance and tunnel leading into the top-secret underground facility were both shot with heavy double-fog and ProMist combinations, which became the basic filters for the Style 7 look.

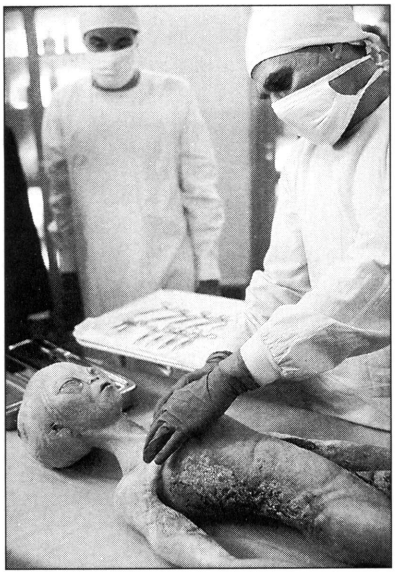
Inside Area 51, we follow Woodward, a member of the MJ12 committee. Contained in an oxygen-sealed recovery room, the only remaining EBE from the Roswell crash is being maintained on life-support and 24-hour personal care. Eventually it dies.

"Jeremy had asked me to make the alien death look like a tropical fish taken out of the water. My first instinct was to do it with black light. I asked Steven Johnson, who made all of the aliens, if he could include some phosphor dyes or paints when he was molding the skin of the puppets. We experimented. This was the only testing we really did on the show, and it worked. Steve gave me a piece of the skin and we tested it with the Wildfire fresnel blacklight. I added an electronic shutter because these lamps can't be dimmed. I asked the set decorators and the wardrobe designer not to use white material on the beds or for the costumes, because they would have glowed as well. A wall was built in the hospital room behind the bed to hide the puppeteers. We used three blacklight spots with electronic shutters. As the creature died, we dialed them out. With the heavy filter combination, a blue halo photographed around the alien. I was very happy with how it turned out."

Style 7D aptly illustrated Townsand's perspective on another encounter with extraterrestrial life which supposedly took place at Holoman Air Force Base in 1964. According to Townsand, the military was involved in a planned exchange with alien beings. In this sequence, Poster presented several unique visual treatments including the use of a 16mm projector to place images on the faces of the principal actors.

The final variation on the Style 7 scenes, Style 7E, involved the mysterious death of Woodward at the Bethesda hospital. "Jeremy and I wanted to do this complex scene in one shot. We were lucky to find the right combination of hospital room, hallway window and exterior to make it possible. It was shot on a Chapman Lenny Arm with a Matthews Remotecam. Unfortunately, the shot got cut in two to shorten the scene. It was the right decision for the story. It's still a good scene. The editor, David Holden did a masterful job putting this picture together with Jeremy."

A scene taking place in Marcel's motel room called for an



innovative solution to a problem often faced by directors of photography: delicately balancing facial tones with background walls dangerously close to the same tonal level.

"There was only one table lamp in the scene and I figured that it had to be my motivating source, but there was no way to hang an instrument low enough to be effective. Finally, it came to me — cut a hole in the wall behind the lamp and use a Dedo for the source on the son. Then I got into it. I worked out my frustration by destroying the set wall with the hole, and I decided to use only a few lights to complete the setup. I dropped in another Dedo for backlight on Marcel and his wife, and used a little bounce fill from the camera position to open it up a taste. And I was done. Three lights lit the master. Often the simple solutions are the best."

Since the initial airing of *Roswell* in July, there has been a renewed interest in the incident. The government responded by releasing an official statement saying that the recovered wreckage was, in fact, a downed spy balloon and not a standard weather-balloon — effectively admitting that the story it stood behind for the last 37 years was a lie. *Omni* magazine has gone so far as to release a general petition requesting the declassification of all related documents, which are currently being withheld from the public.

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"Team Woody" Fires *Bullets Over Broadway*

Cinematographer Carlo Di Palma, production designer Santo Loquasto and editor Sandy Morse discuss their ongoing collaboration with the king of urban comedy.

by Jean Oppenheimer

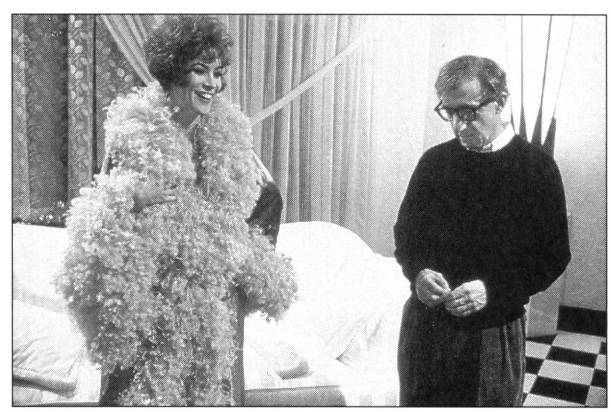
When he was 11 years old, Carlo Di Palma was presented with a still camera by the great Italian director Vittoria De Sica. Within four years, the teenager was working in features as a camera assistant. Susan (Sandy) Morse was raised in New Jersey and studied history at Yale before gravitating to film editing. Future production designer Santo Loquasto was kicked out of school while still in kindergarten. His crime: "being contrary." Depending upon one's point of view, his expulsion qualifies as either the least or the most auspicious beginning of them all.

Along with costume designer Jeffrey Kurland, this trio comprises one of the longest-running and most successful filmmaking teams working today. The director who binds them together is Woody Allen.

"I pencil in the Woody schedule from August to December as a time that I am in theory working for him," says Loquasto, who has worked on 14 Allen pictures. Di Palma, who has shot nine, does much the same, arriving in New York in September for what has become a traditional October start date. "For me it is especially important to have the same team; everybody understands my English," jokes Di Palma.

Morse is in perhaps the best position to talk about working with Allen: she has cut every film of his since *Manhattan*, and prior to that served as Ralph Rosenblum's assistant on *Annie Hall* and *Interiors*. That's 20 films in a 19-year period. Between extensive pre- and postproduction duties, she works pretty much the entire year for the elusive writer/director.

The latest film to bear the group's signature is *Bullets Over Broadway*, a backstage comedy set in the 1920s and populated by gangsters, their molls, and pretentious theater types. "There's a real Damon Runyan style about *Bullets*," says Loquasto, who observes that all of Allen's period films reflect a certain literary vision of



Photos by Brian Hamill, courtesy of Miramax Films

New York. John Cusack, in the traditional Woody Allen role, appears as a bespectacled playwright, staging his first Broadway production with the financial backing of a gangster — in return for casting the gangster's talentless girlfriend in a lead role.

The film's color scheme is red and yellow; like most of Allen's period pictures, it is bathed in a golden glow. "It's more than just sepia tones," muses Loquasto. "It's riper and lustier than nostalgia. The light really grows out of the environment; it's part of the color composition, allowing for a real oil-painted luminosity."

Di Palma, who says he had painters Reginald Marsh and Edward Hopper in mind while designing the look, explains that he employed few enhancements in the photography. "There is no gel in front of the camera and the film is not developed differently during printing. Before shooting, Woody and I talk about the general style of the movie, then I decide which gel to put in front of the lights. In general I like warm light, especially with period movies. So does Woody."

Di Palma also favors long takes and camera movement within shots. Movement, he says, is very important in an Allen film; from a strictly aesthetic point of view, it also proves far more interesting. "I don't like a master, then a close-up and another close-up," says Di Palma. "I prefer the long takes. They're much more difficult to light, but I still prefer them; they are much more creative."

The first question on many viewers' minds is whether *Bullets Over Broadway* continues the wild, handheld camera style used in Allen's last few films, especially *Husbands and Wives*. Di Palma explains why it doesn't: "In *Husbands and Wives*, the camera is a participant; it sees through the eyes of one actor, then another, conveying an almost psychological point of view. *Bullets* calls for a more objective viewpoint; the camera acts as a painter's eye."

Di Palma works exclusively with zoom lenses, alternating between a Primo 16-70mm, a 20-100 and a 25-250. "I don't like a static camera," he explains. "I like to use a little dolly and a little zoom. I want just a little movement

Opposite: ***Actress Jennifer Tilly responds to Woody's wit as the pair works out a scene in an apartment set. Note the period light fixure behind Allen.***
This page: ***The struggling writer (John Cusack, left), the musical producer (Jack Warden, right) and their respective spouses (Mary-Louise Parker, left and Hope W. Sacharoff, right) get together for "dinner and a show." Period touches highlight Dante Ferretti's stylish set.***

for the composition."

The zoom is invariably disguised within a pan or track. The nightclub scene at the beginning of *Bullets* provides a case in point. The shot opens wide and zooms in to Nick Valenti (actor Joe Viterelli) at a table before cutting to his cronies entering the club. The camera then pans and zooms with them as they join Nick at the table.

Long takes, of course, can pose problems in the cutting room; for example, the first and last third of a shot can be perfect while the middle bit sags. Rather than forcing a cut that will disrupt a sequence, Morse says that Allen prefers to reshoot the scene. The filmmaker is famous for his reshoots, which are built into the production's budget and schedule.

Adjacent to Morse's editing room is a small, comfortable, slightly irregular screening room. The projection booth is not elevated above the main floor, but sits on the same level. Anyone sitting in the projector's line of vision will appear as shadows on the screen. To avoid this, chairs have been placed along the room's perimeter rather than in the center of the room. The center area remains open — the better to pace across. It is here that Morse and Allen spend some of their most productive hours.

"Our tendency is to go into the screening room and pace and chat down something that isn't working," says Morse. "We might say 'Well, suppose we started with scene 94 and then cut to scene 10 and then went to 35.' We shoot each others' ideas down until we come to something we feel would have a logical flow in terms of the material we have. And while we're doing this we'll be throwing out some mock voice-over to give the other person an idea of why we think these scenes would flow in this order."

Morse notes that Allen himself refers to the editing phase as "a last opportunity to rewrite the picture." She cites *Interiors* as an example. "The way it was originally written, the movie got off to a very slow start. You didn't have a clue as to what it was about for the first 20 minutes. [I suggested] using scene 83 as the opening. Scene 83, which was literally two-thirds of the way into the picture, has the E.G. Marshall character telling his new wife Pearl about his first wife Eve, describing the effect she had on the family and how he thought their daughters were affected by being raised by somebody as rigid as she was.

"We were lucky that Marshall was standing with his back to the camera, looking out the window in his office, because we were able to take [the different] portions we wanted and string them together, and then [intercut the actual incidents he was talking about.] As we cut away to those visuals and then back to him, he seemed to be explaining what was happening to the audience rather than to Pearl, who was not part of the scene as we ultimately put it together. By pulling that scene from way down in the picture [and placing it at the head,] we established our premise. Once we did that, the picture flowed, and viewers had some anchor in understanding what we were talking about."

Morse adds that certain pictures— including *Radio Days, Annie Hall* and *Zelig* — were entirely restructured in the cutting room. Because the stories unfolded in a stream-of-consciousness fashion, moving scenes around proved

Top: ***Lounging in her luxurious boudoir, the gangster's moll (Tilly) practices her lines with the help of her lover's right-hand man (Chazz Palmintieri).*** **Bottom:** ***A portrait of the artist as a young, impoverished man. Cusack and Parker evoke the writer's early struggle.***

easy; the associations from one scene to the next were not linear connections but emotional ones.

Reshoots are done during principal photography — time and schedule permitting — or after principal photography wraps. Usually Allen knows from looking at dailies what he wants to redo, but in the case of *Crimes and Misdemeanors* it wasn't until the film had been edited that the decision was made to completely rewrite — and reshoot — the Alan Alda-Mia Farrow subplot.

"One of the things we confronted in that film," says Morse, "was that when you are cutting back and forth between a couple of threads of a story, you want the same sense of progress in thread B as you have in thread A. The Martin Landau [throughline] was clear and worked well; there wasn't as much development in thread B, however, so the characters were revised and the action totally reworked."

Even in the early stages of a picture, cutting is a fairly elaborate enterprise for Morse. Instead of making do with just the production track, she lays in and mixes both sound effects and music. That way Allen sees something much closer to what the final product will be, allowing him to more easily gauge the emotional effect of the scenes.

Morse does this initial sound work herself, with the help of her assistants Billy Kruzykowski and Kent Blocher. Their equipment is fairly sophisticated; although they don't do much equalization of tracks, they can mix eight or ten tracks together simultaneously.

Due to the nature of their jobs, Di Palma and Loquasto work much more closely with each other than with Morse. The are so attuned to each another that Loquasto can do a lot of the preliminary location scouting with Allen before Di Palma arrives in New York.

"I am there to serve the cinematographer," says Loquasto, adding with a laugh, "I'm sure I've provided more lamps for Carlo than any other living designer [has.]" According to Loquasto, the cameraman likes to pull down window shades: it helps give him his famous field of golden color. Loquasto points to a late-afternoon scene in *Broadway*, during which Helen Sinclair takes John Cusack back to her apartment for the first time. "Every light is on — not just some of them," the production designer says with a chuckle. "No one sees it because the camera kind of sweeps through the room. Here and there I put yellow bulbs. We dipped them or use some [amber-colored] bulbs I found. That was up to Carlo; I gave him the option."

Loquasto admires the energy and enthusiasm Di Palma brings to a film. "There is this real rush and exuberance in his response to the moment. It's instinctive and fiercely romantic. He looks at the set when it's done and just goes at it, snapping his fingers and talking about 'the glow of the wall here,' or saying things like 'Lower the practical there.' He's in heaven."

Di Palma laughs when told of the production designer's remarks. "I love my job. I am not the best technically; many times my light is not by the book, but I don't think of technique when I'm working. I prefer 'invention.'"

Di Palma dislikes storyboards and claims that if a director hands him one, he leaves immediately. He prefers spontaneity, devising something on the spur of the moment which seems appropriate to the scene at hand. Morse says that Allen has a similar temperament. "It may derive from his years in stand-up comedy," she theorizes, "where you know that what you do spontaneously is usually done for a good impulse, even though you may not be able to ra-

tionally explain it to somebody and have them draw it out for you on a storyboard."

Loquasto says that while Allen isn't locked into things the way many directors are, he can become fixated on certain ideas. "He often wants to shoot in places like [the restaurant] 21, where you can't nail into a wall and where the ceilings are low; that can make it difficult for the cameraman. On *Bullets* he wanted to shoot in places that no longer existed. He kept thinking there would be an area in midtown Manhattan that would pass for 1928 without our doing anything."

For Loquasto, the location coup of the picture was the rooftop terrace of Helen Sinclair's penthouse apartment. Finding a site in 1994 that didn't include a view of the Twin Towers, the Empire State Building or the Chrysler Building was not an easy task.

An innocuous-looking office building on Nassau Street in lower Manhattan saved the day. What looked utterly unexceptional to the passerby on the street actually proved to have a beautiful, early 20th-century roof. It not only offered architecture consistent with Sinclair's apartment — which was on 110th Street and Riverside Drive — but also allowed a view of buildings across the street that were of the same period.

Another location masterstroke was an old movie theater built under the elevated tracks in Brooklyn's Williamsburg section. To find a theater from that era so close to the tracks was a major accomplishment. Shooting proved problematic, however, especially during rush hour, when filming had to stop every time a train roared into the station. In Loquasto's final analysis, the effort was something of a disappointment, since the finished shots don't suggest the proximity of the tracks to the theater.

Because most of Allen's movies are shot in New York, care must be taken not to repeat locations from film to film. A ballroom at The New Yorker Hotel became The Three Deuces, the nightclub in *Bullets*. Although the same site had been used in *Radio Days*, it had been decorated differently in that picture. One selling point was that

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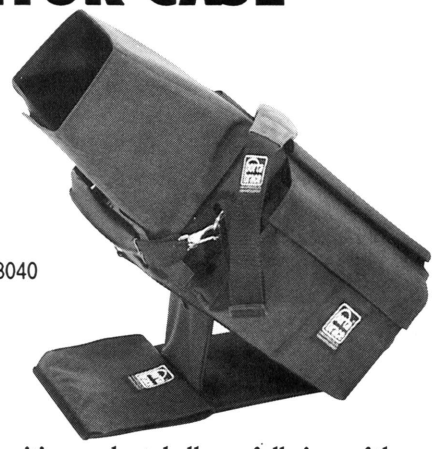

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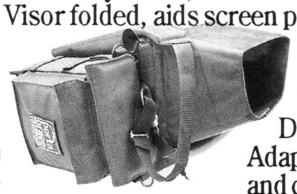

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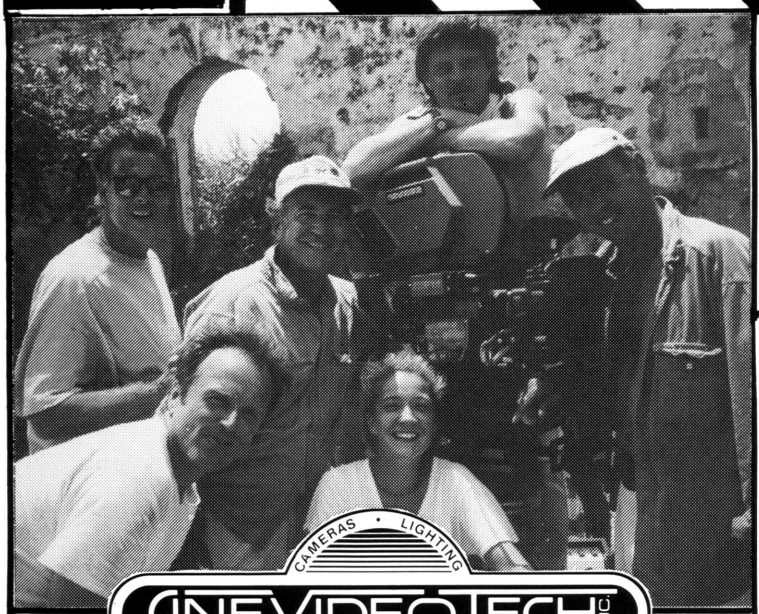
the room had existing bays carved into the ceiling, from which grips could hang huge bay lights. Although this was a time- and labor-intensive job, it allowed the filmmakers to shoot the nightclub scenes without any additional lights.

Bullets Over Broadway marks the eighth time Di Palma, Loquasto and Morse have worked together as a team; they are currently in production on their ninth film. Asked to describe their relationship and working environment, each department head offered a different analogy. "They are my family now," says Di Palma with great affection. "It's very important for me to have the same team."

"There is a casual familiarity and trust between the four of us," agrees Loquasto, "and we have developed our own vocabulary. I sort of know how Carlo will try to shoot things." The production designer compares the team to a group of boarders rather than to a family. "You recognize the elbow in your face at the dining room table," he smiles. "You know your way around a situation — whether people are in a good mood or bad mood — because you're used to each other."

"There's a definite affection for one another," agrees Morse, who describes the group as "sort of like college roommates. I used to play a lot of team sports, and that's temperamentally exactly where I like to be. My feeling was always that what mattered was the team; what didn't matter at all was which individual got the ball through the goal or which individual made the save. The idea was to maximize everybody's strengths and minimize people's weaknesses.

"I think that [approach] translates into filmmaking," she concludes. "The result is improved by virtue of working as a team and trying to help each other out without worrying about who contributed what. I think that's the way Woody looks at it as well."



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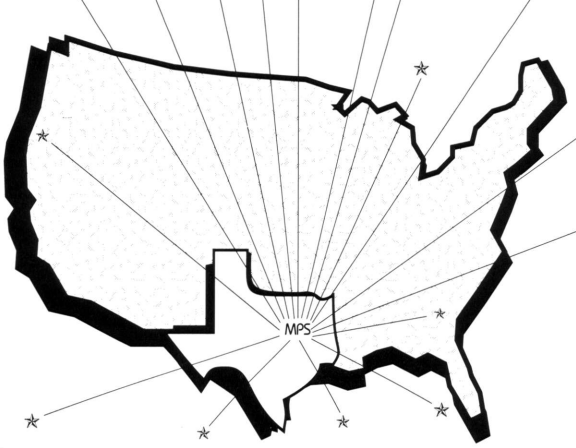

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Explosive Close-Ups Trigger *Blown Away*

Gregory McClatchy Film fuses macrophotography to principal footage in tale of mad bomber run amok.

by Katherine Stalter

Illusion is central to the art of filmmaking, and no one knows that better than people who create the effects and other imagery for feature films. In MGM's recent action picture *Blown Away*, elements of the most exciting and suspense-filled sequences were created using objects such as stoves, telephones and speedometers filmed in close-up, then edited into dramatic sequences to enhance the overall sense of tension.

These "macro" shots were created and shot by West Hollywood-based Gregory McClatchy Film, which specializes in marketing for motion pictures and television. McClatchy's projects include main title sequences, trailers and special-shoot trailers, consisting of such material as effects and macro shots filmed after principal photography is completed. The company recently worked on the marketing campaign for Gramercy Pictures' *Panther*, directed by Mario Van Peebles.

According to McClatchy, the *Blown Away* job came about when his firm was asked to create a theatrical teaser trailer for the film. MGM, along with *Blown Away* producer John Watson and director Stephen Hopkins, were pleased with the trailer's look and asked McClatchy to produce further macro material for the feature.

McClatchy's task was to create what he has dubbed a "macro-noir world, where disaster hides in stoves, telephones, stereos and auto speedometers." In the film's climactic scene, which takes place onboard a ship called the *Dolphin*, action sequences featuring Jeff Bridges, Tommy Lee Jones and Forest Whitaker are intercut with close-up scenes of the exposive device, a Rube Goldberg contraption made up of marbles, chutes, pulleys and buckets. During the several minutes it takes for the marble to roll down the chutes, the audience sees the results of McClatchy's work. "For the *Dolphin* detonator scene," he says, "production designer John Greysmark had created a blueprint of the Rube Goldberg device, more realistic than what we had done for the trailer, but still very involved and fanciful."

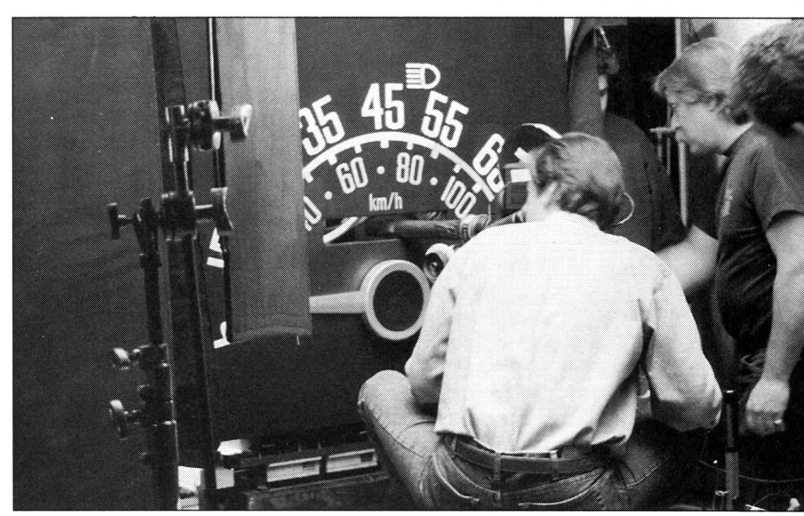
Adds McClatchy, "Steve Hopkins had a definite idea of what he wanted to do with the sequences: create metaphors for a chain of terrorism." For the feature, Hopkins gave McClatchy specific directions as to the types of macro scenes he wanted. In addition to scenes involving overscale models, McClatchy's team completed insert photography, including shots of feet on auto pedals.

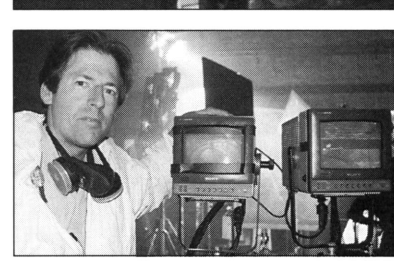
"Even though most of this assignment was macro because it was shot in Super 1:85," McClatchy notes, "our setpieces had to be very wide. At times [art director and prop man] Malcolm Hitchcock had to assemble setpieces wide enough to shoot an entire live-action scene just to get a rolling marble, because you have so much east-west [latitude] in the widescreen formats."

Motorized overscale models were created by Ruck Goldmyer, project manager at Cinnabar in Hollywood. One model was used in a scene in which the camera moved through the numbers of an odometer. "We used a model that was ten times over scale and motorized to split," explains McClatchy.

During the last week of principal photography, cinematographer Ramsey visited the film's set on the Warner Hollywood lot. "They had amazing sets," he recalls. "They had built the inside of the ship, with everything set at Dutch angles so you had to actually walk up a hill on the stage. Greg McClatchy, [McClatchy Films producer] Vince Arcaro and I masked off areas with pieces we wanted to save, based on the shots we had to get."

A rough cut of the film had already been assembled once





Photos courtesy of Gregory McClatchy Film

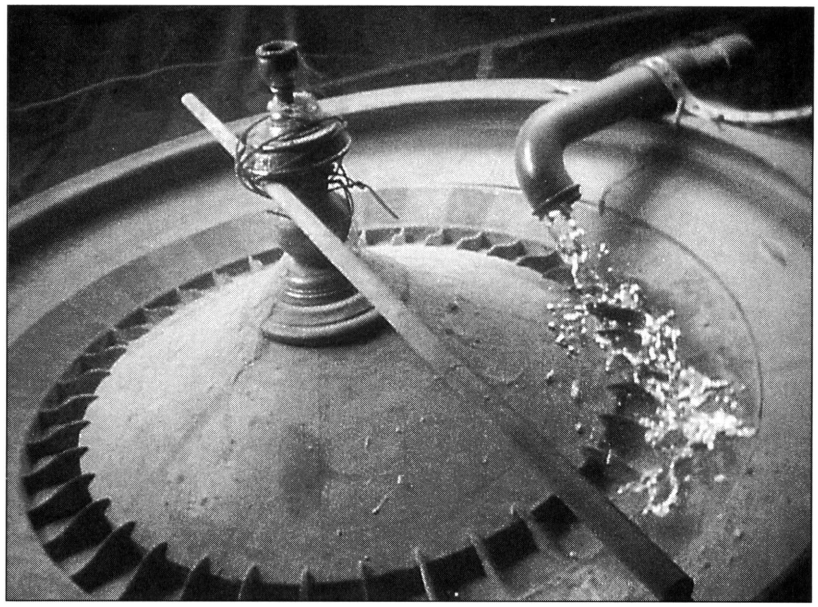
McClatchy and his team began filming. By that time, the film's producers knew what shots they were still missing, so McClatchy's responsibility grew from the original assignment of shooting macros. "We were supposed to come in for special-effects macro stuff," says Ramsey, "but we wound up covering cutaways and other shots [the producers] realized they needed."

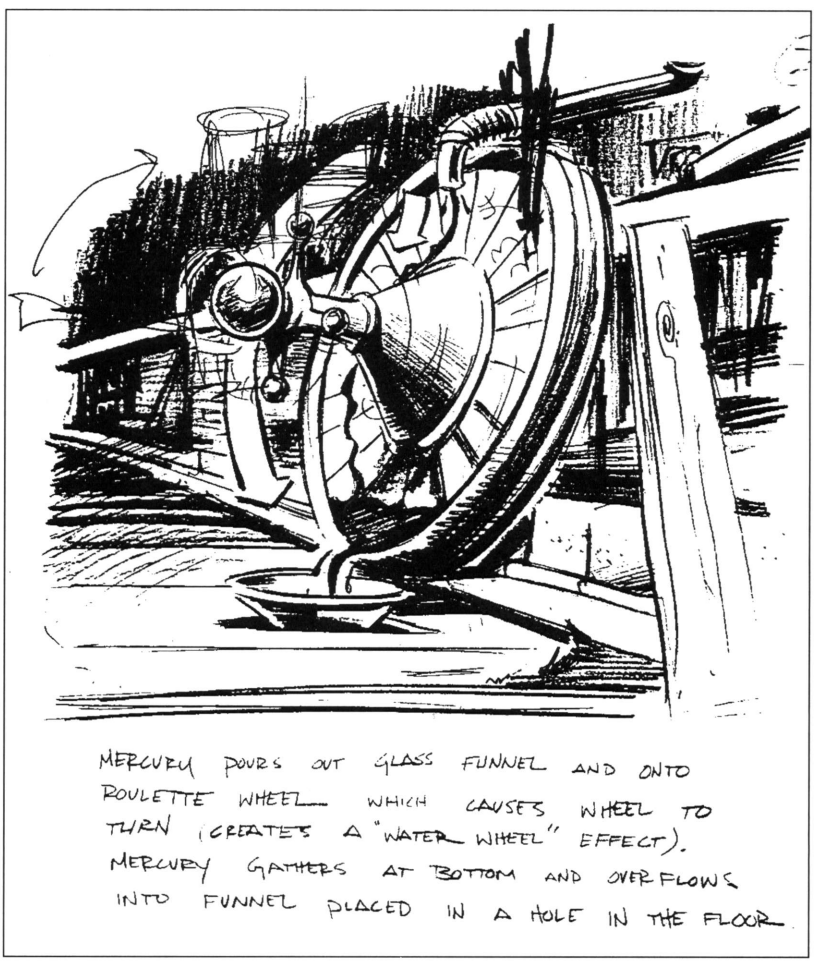
Ramsey's "day job" is directing and shooting tabletop commercials through New York's Fahrenheit Films. Though he had wanted to speak at length with first-unit cinematographer Peter Levy, their schedules didn't coincide, so Ramsey ended up watching Levy's dailies and matching the angles and direction of light sources. "I spoke with him briefly, and he had done a lot of what's called 'flashing the film,' which is subjecting the film inside the camera to a low level of light. It lowers the contrast, and it's a look he went after for the film, so we had to match it.

"We did a fair amount of Photosonics also," adds Ramsey. "For the mercury shots, we were shooting at about 300 frames per second to slow down the mercury. That uses a lot of light. Among my favorite shots is one that chases the mercury down a pipe. We used a Superscope lens to push our way through that pipe. That was done at about 120 frames per second."

Ramsey says that the Superscope lens, made by CPT, "allowed us to get into a lot of places, like a phone plug. For that shot, we had an oversized model, and the lens let us get inside there and do moves which you normally wouldn't be able to do." The same was true of shots involving the car odometer. "We started on its face and then went into the numbers. The lens was about an inch-and-a-quarter in diameter and about 18 inches long, so it allowed us to get right inside."

For shots chasing the lit fuse of the explosive device, Ramsey used a jib-arm rig that enabled the camera to be floated. "[That] let me move it around freely," he explains. "We needed to move the camera in a four- or five-foot area. That's not a tremendous amount, but when you're doing a macro shot where the whole frame is maybe three or four inches across, that's a long run."




MERCURY POURS OUT GLASS FUNNEL AND ONTO ROULETTE WHEEL— WHICH CAUSES WHEEL TO TURN (CREATES A "WATER WHEEL" EFFECT). MERCURY GATHERS AT BOTTOM AND OVERFLOWS INTO FUNNEL PLACED IN A HOLE IN THE FLOOR.

Opposite top: ***A 10X overscale model speedometer was used in the film's climactic sequence.*** **Opposite bottom:** ***Cinematographer Greg Ramsay and a pair of close collaborators.*** **This page:** ***A water-powered roulette wheel serves as the internal engine for a Rube Goldberg-style explosive device, as explained in a panel from the film's storyboards.***

The most difficult shot to match up, Ramsey recalls, was one in which Forest Whitaker is seen sitting in a chair listening to headphones, which are shown in close-up. "We had to go into the headphones and match the light that was on him. We used an oversized headphone, and we had it open up, so you'd be able to see in there. And in some of the other shots we

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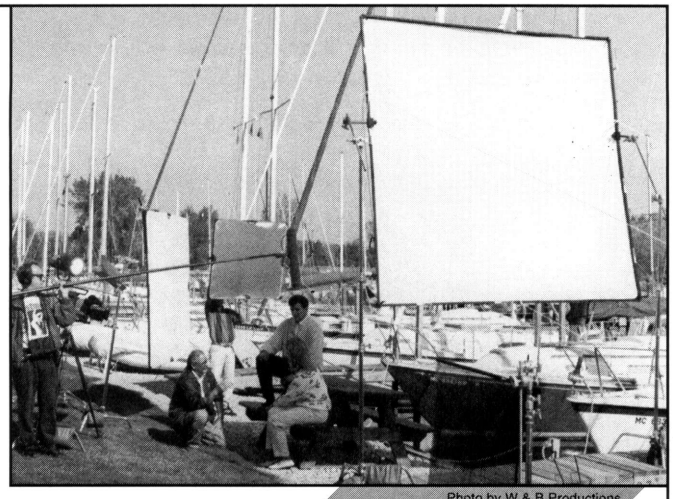

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had to use hand models to match either Tommy Lee Jones or Jeff Bridges, and we had to match lighting and camera angles."

Ramsey used mostly Eastman 5293 stock, the same stock Levy used. "When we needed to go faster, we used either 5296 or 98. We exposed it pretty much normally. We used an Arri 3 that had been converted over to Super 35; the whole movie was shot in Super 35."

Blown Away was Ramsey's second job on a feature film; his first was the title sequence in director Ron Howard's *The Paper*. On that job, he first met producer Arcaro, who thought of him when McClatchy Films landed the *Blown Away* job.

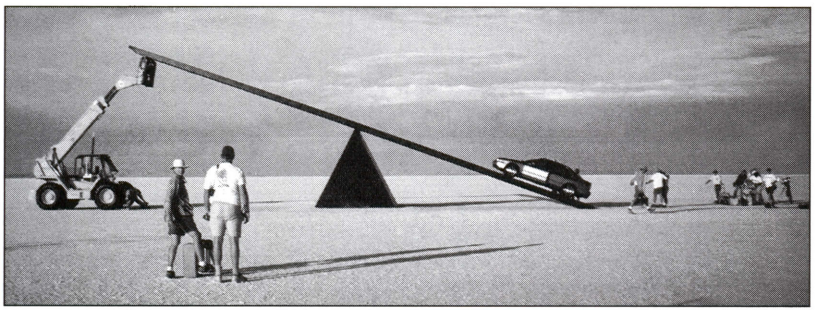
McClatchy says he and Ramsey wanted the macro footage to have a Hitchcockian feel. "When the audience is watching the film, they have an idea of what they're about to see; they have information about what's going to happen that the characters do not."

He cites one scene in which a little girl is lighting a stove rigged with explosives. "We were working with very ordinary objects. Shot one way, the stove igniter wouldn't have been anything special, but if you use noir-ish angles, it seems exaggerated and very suspenseful. The same is true of the *Dolphin* explosion. That's a fast-moving sequence with classic action scenes. The action was intercut with scenes of a ticking clock. We had close-ups of the Rube Goldberg detonator, with mercury, balls and running, moving, kinetic macro objects intercut with the kinetic fight, which kept the motion going."

Despite the challenges, McClatchy was pleased with how the macro and insert sequences turned out. "Greg Ramsey was able to match beautifully the look established by Peter Levy. You're not aware of where the principal photography stops and the macro unit shots begin, which, of course, is the only acceptable result." ❧

Defying Gravity in the Bonneville Salt Flats

by Mary Hardesty



The camera at right was not visible to the main camera, but the crane was painted out in post.

One of the last places you want to be during a violent thunderstorm is standing beneath a 40-foot-tall steel structure in the middle of the Bonneville Salt Flats. Yet that's exactly where director/cinematographer Craig Henderson found himself this past fall when he filmed a national Honda spot.

"Our three-day shooting schedule was extended to four because every day a lightning, wind and rain storm would roll in around three or four in the afternoon and stay for about two hours," recalls Henderson. "But then, one of the reasons you go [to the Salt Flats] is for the dramatic atmosphere and light."

According to Henderson, the area's very simple look made it the ideal location for this 30-second spot, which features a Honda defying gravity as it drives up and across a giant seesaw without lowering the other arm of the balance.

"We wanted a place that resembled a table's surface to shoot these big toys on," says the former art director/still photographer. "The agency wanted to reduce the complexity of this spot and keep it very simple and geometrical."

While the finished spot is dramatically simple, the actual shooting process was quite complicated. "We had to consider how much traction to put on the wheels to get the car up the seesaw," says Henderson. "We ended up shooting some of the footage backwards. The car actually ran down the hill, not up."

The 42-year-old Oregon resident, whose commercial credits include national spots for Lexus, Lincoln Mercury, Bank One and Alamo, claims to come from the old-fashioned school of cinematography. "Maybe it's because I went to an art school that didn't have any money, but I like to do effects in-camera whenever possible," notes Henderson. "We had many talks with the agency about how we were going to accomplish the illusion of defying gravity."

In the end, the illusion was created using an in-camera technique and several cameras. One camera shot the profile of the seesaw, while another camera and crew was positioned directly behind the seesaw, hidden from the first camera. In order to capture the same background and sky images, the same lenses, framing and film stocks were used for both cameras. This tactic provided the necessary footage needed to paint out the crane holding up the seesaw's arm in postproduction. "We shot simultaneously using the same heights, angles, filters and f-stops," says Henderson, who used a third Arriflex camera to shoot close-ups.

"This type of spot almost necessitates having one person be the director and cinematographer," observes

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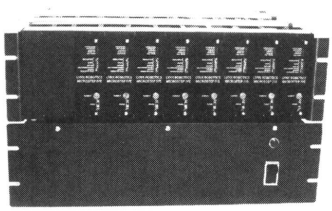

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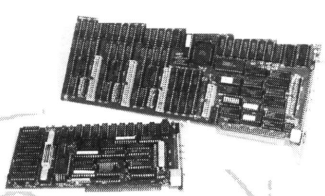

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Henderson, who has been shooting commercials for the past seven years. "It drastically reduces the amount of communication time. This business is so fraught with adjective wars that it make things easier any time you can reduce the number of people involved and the number of translations."

Henderson used video assist monitors to keep track of the footage shot. "The tricky thing about this spot was how to shoot it and not telegraph the ending," he recalls. "It had to be set up in a very methodical way so that the audience expects to see the seesaw go down and is surprised when it doesn't."

Henderson, who has shot four commercials on the salt flats, had the luxury of taking a trip to the area before actual shooting commenced. "One of the things we did to prepare was to take a six-foot model out on a prep trip and shoot storyboard pictures from this model. It enabled me to visualize shots directly above the structure, looking straight down the seesaw at the car on the other end."

To get this perspective with the full-size props, Henderson's crew members found themselves working 80 feet in the air. "It wasn't fun being up on that cherry picker during the storms, but that's the best time to capture the dramatic light," recalls Henderson, who prudently waited until just after the storms to shoot.

Weather is not the only complication when shooting on the salt flats. "A salt flat is really a crust on top of mud," Henderson explains. "You can't just lay a 20-ton prop down anyplace. I once worked on a job where we buried a Shotmaker up to its hubcaps, and wound up bringing in three tow trucks; the last two were used to pull the first tow truck out!"

To avoid this problem, Henderson sent a scout to the flats to find an area that would support the weight of the prop. "There's a big 10-mile track that is fairly thick, but if it hasn't rained recently, there are tire markings all over the place," he relates. "It's very hard to find a pristine area in a thick section, and when we found one, we had to rope it off for a few days before shooting so people wouldn't drive on it."

Henderson notes that things have really changed since he first started shooting on the salt flats. "In the old days, which is only about five years ago, you could do anything out there, but now you can't leave holes or poles in the ground. It's very restrictive. You almost need an environmental permit to work there now."

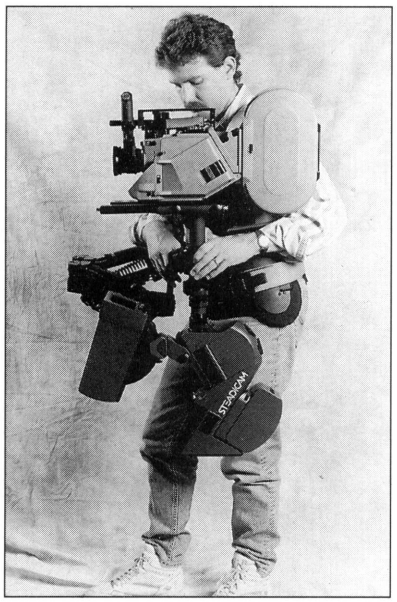
Crews working on the flats also need to keep the salt out of the camera equipment. "Interestingly enough," notes Henderson, "the salt doesn't blow around like sand. It's very sticky and wet. Walking on it is like walking on mud. While you don't have to worry about salt getting on the lens, you do have to clean your equipment every night because, ultimately, the salt does find its way into everything." Henderson adds that a great camera assistant is critical if you are simultaneously acting as director and cameraman.

In crafting the spot, Henderson combined natural ambient light, 85mm and 135mm lenses, neutral blended filters (numbers one, two, and three) and graduated filters (numbers three, six and nine). "On the salt flats, you can have a reverse condition where the white ground is as hot or hotter than the sky, so you're constantly filtering and putting neutral density into the ground as well as the sky," explains Henderson.

The cinematographer shot the spot with Kodak's 98 film stock. He says that the stock provides a fast solution for outdoor shooting problems. "Originally, I was going to go with 93, but when I saw how much the weather was changing, I switched to 98, which is a very good film for capturing as much information as possible. The stock gave us a lot to work with in terms of what we printed. These past few years, I've really changed the way I shoot to fit most video transfer systems. I now want to get as much information on the master as possible. If I had been dealing with a more controlled situation, I'd have thought differently, but out there on the salt flats, you really are at the mercy of nature."

Spot name: "Seesaw"
Client: Honda
Director/cinematographer: Craig Henderson
Agency: Rubin Postaer Agency
Agency producer: Tommy Murov
Art director: Joe Baratelli

compiled by Marji Rhea



Steadicam Advance

Cinema Products Corporation has introduced the Master Series, a new design of the Steadicam camera stabilizing system. The series has a new monitor with a brighter, higher contrast image, provides 16:9 aspect ratio, and has been designed to accommodate cameras equipped with Vidiflex, Cinema Products' new fiberoptic video tap. A patented gimbal system permits the operator to hold the hand grip closer to the unit's center of gravity for more precise camera control. A new camera stage offers both manual and motor-driven control of X and Y axes, with a wireless control housed in the gimbal yoke for easy tilt control and lateral adjustment while operating.

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The Master Series features represent the input of Steadicam operators and Garrett Brown, the inventor of Steadicam. Final design was executed by Cinema Products and Sand Lake Design of San Francisco. The system has been rigorously tested in-house and by several leading independent Steadicam operators.

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Chromakey Software

Imagica's Primatte Version 5.0 chromakey software is compatible with a wide variety of SGI workstations and offers powerful, precise matte control functions for quality image composition. The new version accepts any resolution from formats such as NTSC, PAL D-1, HDTV, and film (4,000 X 3,000). Moving pictures can be processed; parameters are automatically interpolated between key frames. A GUI menu offers quick and effortless operation with simple point-and-drag mouse control. Image data at 8/16 bits per RGB channel can be imported and exported. Internal processing is computed at 16 bits per RGB channel. Up to 10 layers can be composited with its multi-layering capability. Image data can be transferred into a wide variety of file formats, such as SGI (RGB), Tiff, Abekas (YUV), and SoftImage. There is also a noise-canceling function.

The color-correction window allows quick and independent readjustment of foreground and background, making the necessary color balance by manipulating pedestal, gamma, gain, hue, saturation, and brightness for each layer. The color-spill removal function uses an internally generated defocused image, which allows natural-looking, refined composites at the edges between foreground and background. The user can undo/redo up to 500 levels. There is also rectangular garbage-matte control, as well as 3-D color monitoring.

For information: Imagica Corp. of America, 5301 Beethoven St., Suite

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Video Snake Cable

Gepco International's model VS102000 Video Snake Cable is designed for remote use and fixed installations and includes 10 coaxials, cabled together within an overall flexible, all-weather jacket. It is ideal for applications where multiple cables are used, both in the field and the studio. The unit was developed for terminating between rack-mounted and stand-alone equipment, video walls or an application where multiple video cables are used, such as broadcast and video postproduction facilities and live concerts or sports events.

The model includes a total of 10 individual, full-sized 75-Ohm low-loss video coaxials (RG59), cabled together in a black thermoplastic jacket. Each coaxial is a different color for identification, and each coaxial jacket is made of flame-retardant polyvinyl chloride.

For information: Gepco International, Inc., 2225 W. Hubbard, Chicago, IL 60612-1613, (312) 733-9555, FAX (312) 733-6416.

Fonts Software Upgrade

CrystalGraphics' Crystal Flying Fonts 3.0 for Windows platform features 24-bit frame-by-frame output of rendered sequences at any resolution, field rendering, NTSC/PAL color correction and superblack support for use with luminance and chroma key mixers. Other new features include support for TrueType (in addition to PostScript Type 1) fonts and AVI digital format in addition to the already-supported FLC.

A new motion assignment dialog enables the user to visually select one of several predefined motion paths, then edit it using simple controls. Also new is the materials dialog, which offers a choice of over 50 pre-defined materials such as various types of marble, gold and other metals, woods, and plastics. In addition, Flying Font 3.0 incorporates a beveling dialog that lets the user visually select and modify 16 predefined bevel styles.

The new interface features a horizontal toolbar for quick access to 20 commonly used functions, a vertical tool palette designed to allow objects to be quickly built and edited, and an integrated modeling, rendering and animation window.

CrystalGraphics entered an agreement with Criterion Software to develop a plug-in for Flying Fonts based on Criterion's RenderWare Toolkit. This plug-in will provide real-time preview-quality rendering for Flying Fonts users.

For information: CrystalGraphics, Inc., 3110 Patrick Henry Dr., Santa Clara, CA 95054, (800) 979-3535, FAX (408) 496-0970.

Cineon Upgraded

Kodak has released an upgrade of its image manipulation software developed for Cineon digital workstations. For Cineon Digital Film Software version 2.3, Cineon software code has been enhanced to take advantage of the increased performance of Silicon Graphics' hardware and operating system software. Version 2.3 offers greater efficiency and faster image processing, allowing it to operate up to 2.5 times faster than previous versions.

Based on customer feedback, several new tools have been added, including an image stabilization tool for eliminating unsteadiness; a motion-tracking tool for automating the process of following a moving object; enhanced animation curves for precise control of the manipulation of images over time; and a degrain/regrain module for manipulating film's grain signatures.

Cineon's degrain/regrain feature is based on the same algorithms used to create Eastman Kodak film. Unlike other software which adds 'noise' to simulate a film's grain pattern, Cineon software version 2.3 allows users to remove or reduce a film's original grain, manipulate the image, then re-apply a grain pattern from any current color negative Eastman Motion Picture Film — including the popular EXR 5293 and 5296 formats. Users can also produce their own grain which emulates a film that is no longer manufactured. The combination of all these features, for example, allow users to seamlessly intercut archival footage with live-action film and add grain to computer-generated imagery.

A comprehensive set of developer's tools are included with version 2.3, allowing users to create their own image-processing software extensions for use in the Cineon Flowgraph.

An expanded set of video manipulation tools has been added, along

with the incorporation of several new video device drivers. Users will now be able to quickly and easily load and unload CCIR 601 video images from a wide variety of digital disk and tape recorders. A new video-format conversion utility has been added in order to increase the creative interactivity between the facility and its customers. Cineon users can now manipulate film at video resolution to provide their clients with video dailies. The incorporation of a new Transfer Manager utility makes it easier and faster to load and unload high-resolution digital image files from computer tape systems. Cineon retouching software code has been improved, increasing brush speeds between two and ten times, depending on the application.

For information: Eastman Kodak Company, 213-464-6131.

High-magnification ENG Lenses

Fujinon's Broadcast & Communications Products Division's A36X10.5ERD and A36X14.5ERD ENG-style zoom lenses combine extremely long focal length with broad wide-angle coverage. The lenses are lightweight and well-balanced for newsgathering, sports, and other field applications.

The 10.5ERD has a maximum focal length of 378mm (756mm with built-in extender deployed) and a wide angle of 10.5mm. The 14.5ERD has a maximum focal length of 525 mm (1050mm with extender) and a wide angle of 14.5mm. Both lenses incorporate Fujinon's Aspheric Technology for reduced spherical aberration, weigh only 10 pounds each and are inner-focus designs for increased filter flexibility. They also have integral lens support plates and provide full servo control of zoom and focus.

For information: Fujinon, 10 High Point Dr., Wayne, NJ 07470, (201) 633-5600, FAX (201) 533-5216.

Filter Gate System

South London Filters' Filter Gate System is designed for the introduction of cinematographic filtration at telecine transfer to the already processed film stock, negative or positive. The system allows the opportunity to add varying configurations of filtration to the transfer, be it straight diffusion, graduated, color or neutral effect graduation.

35 MM REFLEX

The Fries model 435 is a new general purpose MOS production 35mm camera. With its optical printer compatible register pins, steadiness and 150 FPS speed. The 435 is ideally suited for special effects, commercials or any photography where a quality steady image is desired.

The 435 is a spinning mirror reflex camera with a 170 degree blanking shutter. The internal 30VDC motor runs the camera from 2 to 150 FPS forward and 2 to 50 FPS reverse, in one frame increments all crystal. The camera is equipped with take-up and supply torque motors.

There are both 1000 ft. and 400 ft. displacement type magazines. A new feature is the light valve which allows the operator to direct all the light to the viewing system, or to the video assist, or combo which splits the light between both viewing and video assist.

35 mm, Reflex Camera

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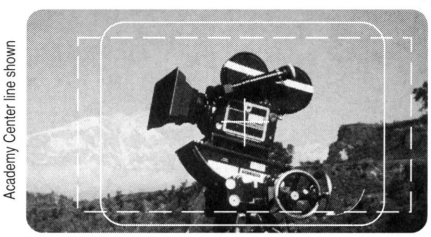

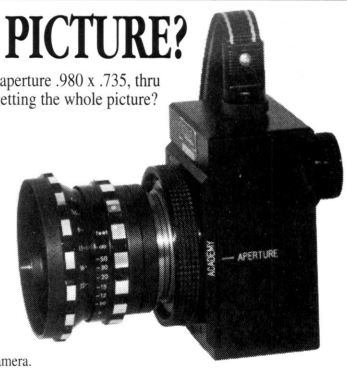

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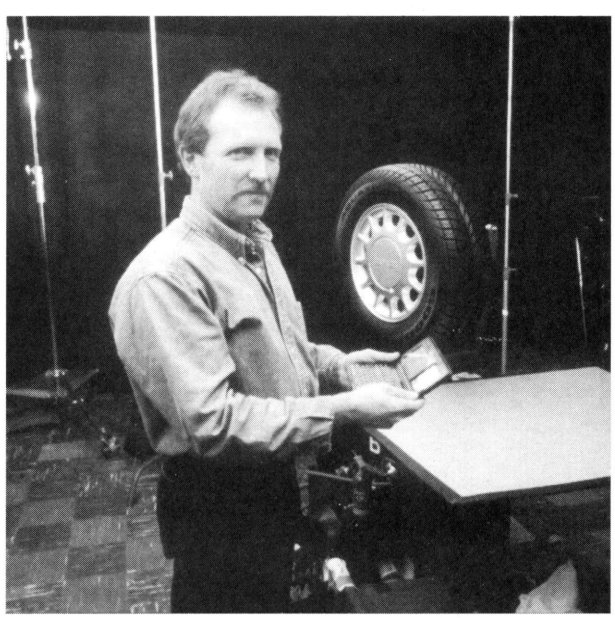

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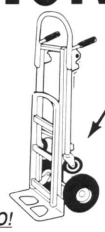

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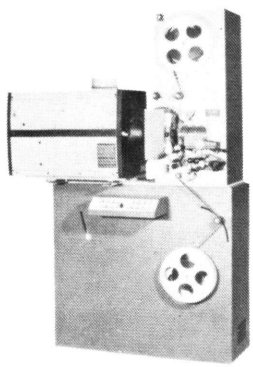

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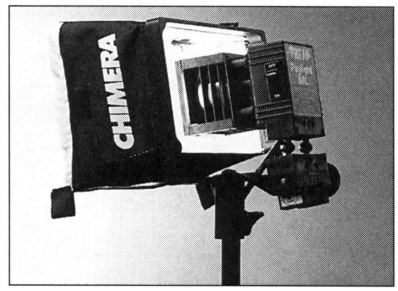
Since this operation does not harm or interfere with the actual film stock, transferred library footage can be jazzed up by the introduction of graduated skies or diffusion of images that may be too sharp. Finer detail can also be administered to your filtration by using your own shades and effects to optical flats, which can allow control of horizons, landscapes and other key areas.

For information: South London Filters, Linton House, Unit 112, 164-180 Union St., London SE1 0LH, 0171-620-3060, FAX 0171-620-1441.



Lighting Instructional Videos, Micro Lightbank

Chimera has adapted its Micro System to the Paglight ML camera light, which can be attached to the model 1615 Micro. With the addition of the Paglight ML, Chimera now adapts 14 different on-camera lights to the Micro Lightbank.

The Micro Lightbank has a front diffusion screen that measures 5" X 8". The speed rings are manufactured from T-6061 alloy and then black anodized. The Micro was designed for the ENG and EFP cameraman to create a soft diffused look when using on-camera lighting. It can also be used as an eyelight for film production.

Chimera also has available two new videos on lighting for film and video, featuring director of photography Bill Holshevnikoff. *Volume I, Lighting Faces,* shows how to use hard and soft light and simple techniques for lighting different skin tones, spectacles, and balding heads. *Volume II, Lighting Interviews,* provides information for lighting a variety of interviews ranging from single-camera news and location setups to multi-camera studio programs. The video gives tips on how to improve ENG lighting, understand HMI lighting and make studio interviews look their best.

For information: Chimera Photographic Lighting, 1812 Valtec Lane, Boulder, CO 80301, (303) 444-8000.

Fast Charger

PAG's AR121PL is a single-channel, micro-computer controlled fast charger. Fitted with the Paglok battery connector, it is a direct replacement for the PAG Micromaster. The charger will charge the entire PAG Lok-on series of batteries, and can charge other battery types via the standard front-mounted 2.1mm socket (BP90 type connector).

The unit incorporates PAG's "Widerange" input which will automatically operate from any AC power supply worldwide. The unit can also be run from a 12V vehicle battery by using the PAG Vehicle Battery-Power Converter.

The unit operates under control of PAG Advanced Charging System and is capable of charging a wider range of battery voltages and capacities, 4 to 14.4V and 1 to 7Ah. When the main charging program is completed, the charger will keep the battery on automatic maintenance charge, ensuring the battery is at its peak capacity, ready for immediate use.

For information: PAG Limited, 565 Kingston Road, Raynes Park, London SW20 8SA, 81-543-3131, FAX 81-540-4797.

Publication for Nagra Users

The Education & Training Division of Equipment Emporium has published the *Guide to the Nagra 4.2 Sync Recorder (and other articles),* written by Fred Ginsburg, CAS. Ginsburg is a professor and accomplished sound mixer with more than 15 years' experience recording dialogue on feature motion pictures, commercials and episodic TV, as well as corporate, government, and law-enforcement projects. He has instructed hundreds of students and seminar attendees on the use of the Nagra.

The guide is 48 pages long, softbound, and amply illustrated with photographs. Also included are articles on mic strategy, shotgun mics, lavaliers,

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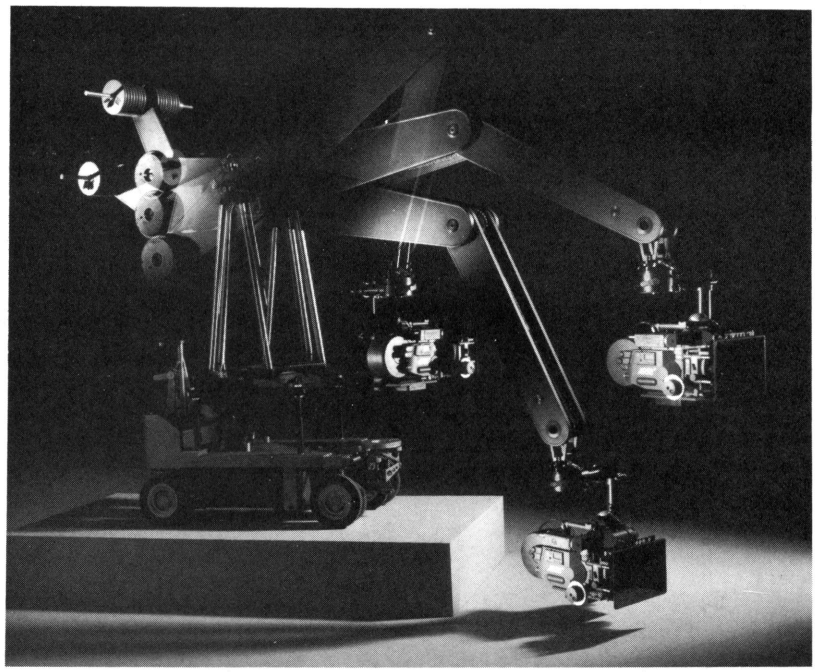

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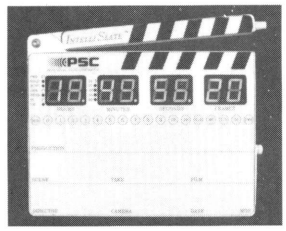

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For information: Equipment Emporium, 9247 Dorrington Ave., Arleta, CA 91331, (818) 894-4034, FAX (818) 894-2625.

PowerMac Animation Software

The ElectricImage Animation System Power Macintosh Version 2.1 is now available, offering increased speed in rendering features such as glow lights, fog lights and floating point intensive work; a snappier interface for faster choreography; quick screen draws; and the ability to shade simple models in real time.

For information: ElectricImage, 117 East Colorado Blvd., Suite 300, Pasadena, CA 91105, (818) 577-1627, FAX (818) 577-2426.

Programmable Spotlight

Xenotech's Britelight 7000ART high-powered xenon light uses a programmable mechanical articulation system and is fully automated with both a vertical and horizontal range. It can be positioned manually and has a peak beam of 795 million candlepower — one unit can register a brightness of 12 footcandles two miles from the source. The stand-alone Britelight 7000 weighs 95 pounds and measures 24 X 24 X 24 inches with a height of 32 inches, including the yoke. It is also equipped with a 185-pound power supply.

For information: Xenotech, 8211 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 767-0365, FAX (818) 767-0395.

Digital Audio Adapter

Sierra Design Labs' Quick-Frame Digital Audio Adapter offers four channels of AES/EBU digital audio storage and can be retrofitted to all models of the Quick-Frame family of real-time digital video disk recorders except the three-minute EL model. The audio capacity matches Quick-Frame with a maximum 8% overall reduction and can be recorded and edited independently in stereo pairs.

For information: Sierra Design Labs, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village, NV 89451, (702) 831-7837.

A Great Day in Harlem Evokes the Jazz Age

by Brooke Comer

Jean Bach's hour-long documentary *A Great Day in Harlem*, slated for a theatrical release this spring, recaptures a lost time in jazz history. Bach, a former journalist and radio producer, was an insider on the jazz circuit during its golden age and has counted among her friends Duke Ellington, Bobby Short, Billy Strayhorn, Lena Horn and Artie Shaw. *New Yorker* jazz critic Whitney Balliett devoted an entire chapter to her ("The Fan") in his book *Barney, Bradley and Max; 16 Portraits in Jazz*. "That sums up my role in this film," says Bach. "I'm the enthusiast."

Bach's film was inspired by a 1958 photo for *Esquire* magazine by Art Kane featuring a gathering of jazz legends. Kane's shoot was an ambitious project, especially considering that it was his first professional photograph. Then a young magazine art director, he assembled the group by putting the word out on the street for all New York jazz musicians to meet him in front of a certain Harlem brownstone at 10:00 a.m. one summer morning. Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Marion McPartland, Milt Hinton, Gene Krupa, Art Farmer, Sonny Rollins, Count Basie, and Thelonius Monk were among the crowd that appeared in the photo. Beginning in 1989, Bach interviewed as many of the surviving group as she could find; the result is *A Great Day in Harlem*.

Bach decided to make her film while talking to Milt Hinton about his memories of the day the photo was taken. He told her he'd had his wife Mona shoot the gathering with an 8mm movie camera. "A light bulb went on in my head," says the producer. "That's when I decided to make the film."

Bach considers *A Great Day in Harlem* a tribute to her husband, TV producer Bob Bach. She originally chose to shoot the memorial on videotape. Later, when she realized the potential that the big screen offers, she decided to transfer the 60-minute tape to film. She plans eventually to use the hours of tape that didn't make it into the film for an educational television series.

Steve Petropoulos, a cameraman with a background in documentaries and news for NBC and ABC, was chosen to shoot interview segments. Co-producer Matthew Seig, says Bach, "is the brains of the show." Editor Susan Peehl spent a year and a half making notes under pictures, "then braiding all the information together," says Bach. "I had overshot, and had some 30 hours worth of tape."

Bach began to work on her project before she even saw Milt Hinton's 8mm movie. "I felt like a detective," Bach recalls. "I was constantly trying to find clues and track down elusive musicians. In the case of one man, I was always one woman behind. Every place I called, a woman would tell me he'd left."

In the photo, a line of children sit on the curb in front of the musicians. Bach placed an ad in the *Amsterdam News*, an African-American newspaper in Manhattan, asking anyone who'd been in the photo to contact her. She got several responses, including one from the child who'd sat next to Count Basie.

"Finally," she notes, "it came together. But it was like a giant jigsaw puzzle." Hinton's film was a crucial piece in that puzzle, and Bach hounded the musician to locate his 36-year-old film. "Milt knew the film was in his basement, but he was too busy to go down there and search for it. I stayed on the case and kept after him. He'd be playing in a jazz club and there I'd be. He'd see me and think, 'uh-oh.'"

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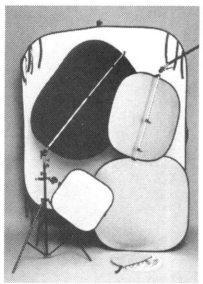

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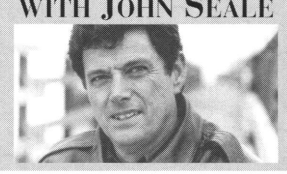

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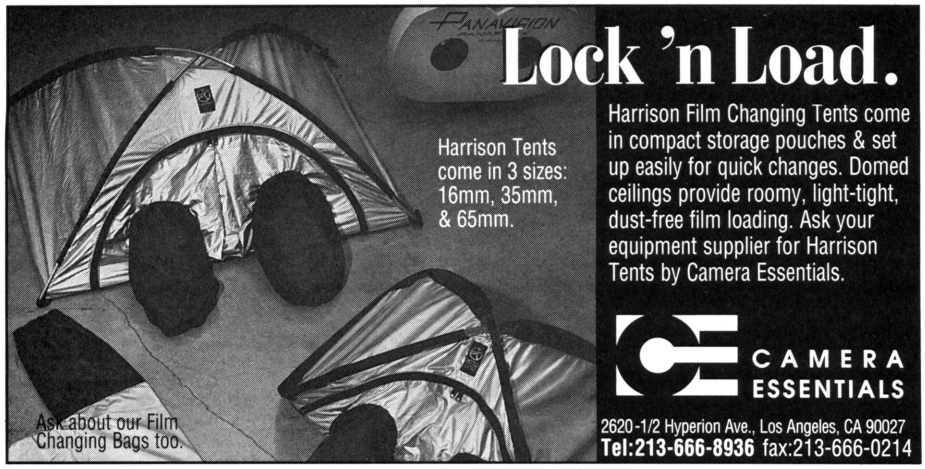
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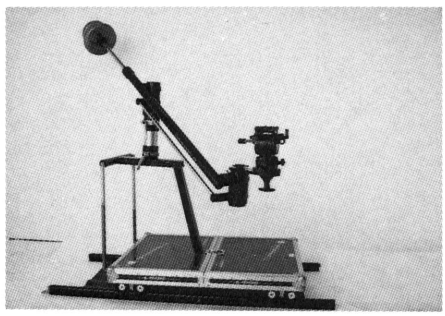

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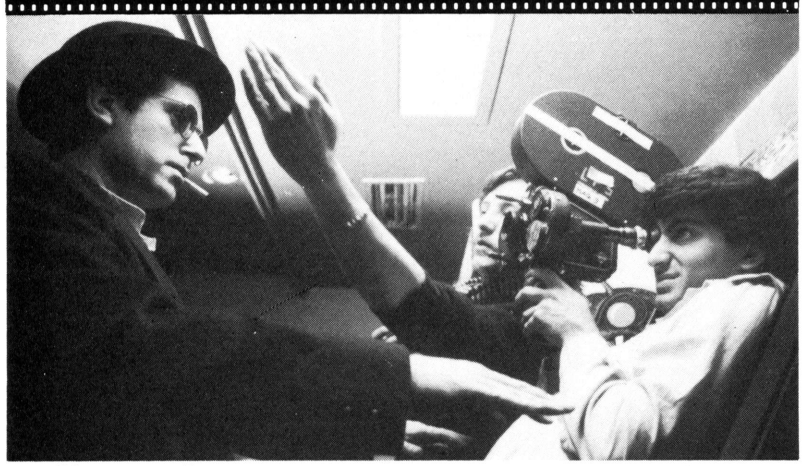

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The film was finally found, but Bach was alarmed to hear that it was crumbling and torn. Fortunately, once she found a transfer house to put the film on tape, editor Susan Peehl was able to work around the problem areas. "Sue gave it a certain vitality that makes it seem like more than it is," says Bach. "And luckily, we had something to work with. If that original film hadn't been any good, I'd have jumped out the window."

Petropoulos shot the interview segments with his own Ikegami 79 and a Sony BVP-7. The project began on three-quarter-inch tape and ended up on Beta. "In the beginning," says the videographer, "no one knew what the final format would be. Jean was busy getting the musicians she knew — and she knew almost everyone who was still alive — to agree to do interviews. But we didn't really know if we were doing a one-hour show or a series."

When Bach began the project, she had no idea how much it would cost, "so I never thought of looking for financial backing. I was doing it out of pocket. I had no idea it would become such an enormous job." Not until after she hired her editor, co-producer and director of photography did she realize the magnitude of her undertaking. She began to seek grants and other means of funding in the late 1980s, "just exactly when you began to hear pocketbooks snapping shut all across America. Every proposal I sent in was turned down." Finally, Bach was reunited with an old friend who ran a foundation and was able to help get the project off the ground. (The majority of the interviews were taped in Bach's Greenwich Village home, the former studio of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.)

Having already won a prize at the Chicago Film Festival, *A Great Day in Harlem* will be released on February 17 in New York, and will later be shown in California and other key areas in the U.S. and abroad. "Jazz films can be bleak," says Bach. "My take on jazz is that it's a joyous experience, a collaborative effort, with so many different people getting along during such a special time."

Petropoulos, who has shot documentaries around the world for over 30 years, offer a wry summation. "It was a very nice, simple shoot," he says, "that went on for three and a half years."

Books in Review

by George Turner

Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent
by Matthew Bernstein
University of California, cloth, 484 pps., $35

Walter Wanger, "Hollywood's Ivy League producer," was a strong influence in film production for more than four decades. In 1920, at 26, he became a junior executive under Jesse Lasky at Paramount. Eventually he produced 65 features, either as a contractee at various studios or as an independent. These include the good *(The Bitter Tea of General Yen, The Trail of the Lonesome Pine, Algiers, Canyon Passage, Reign of Terror),* the bad *(Spendthrift, The Adventures of Hajji Baba),* the great *(Foreign Correspondent, Stagecoach, Scarlet Street)* and the disastrous *(Joan of Arc, Cleopatra).*

There were plenty of ups and downs in Wanger's life, both public and private — if a famed producer married to a popular movie star (Joan Bennett) can be said to have a private life. The disintegration of a seemingly ideal marriage, the nightmarish three years when the Wangers maintained Diana Productions in partnership with the fractious Fritz Lang, and the financial debacles climaxed by the accursed *Cleopatra* are depicted with understanding in Bernstein's tome.

The author, assistant professor of film studies at Emory University, was research assistant to Donald Spoto on the controversial Alfred Hitchcock bio *The Dark Side of Genius.* He gives Wanger a much kinder exposition than Hitchcock was accorded via Spoto's meat-axe approach. Bernstein is more critical of Wanger for touting social consciousness in films — while making mostly escapist entertainment — than for any of his personal misdeeds, which included extramarital affairs and an infamous *cause célèbre* in which he pumped a bullet into Jennings Lang.

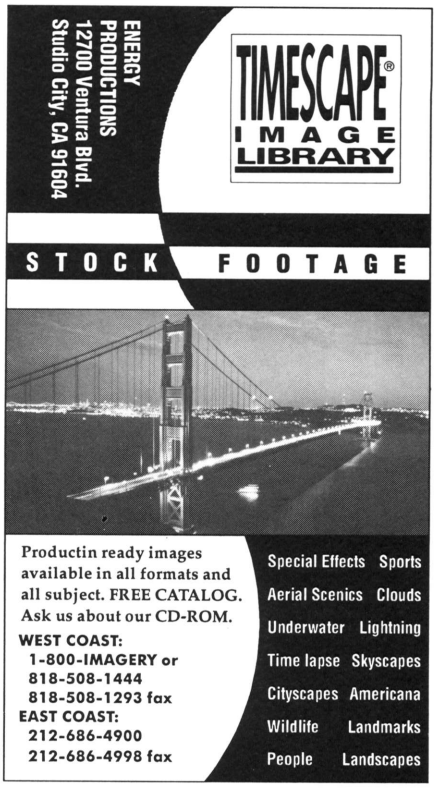
There's plenty of solid research here, as well as a filmography (including final costs and net profit-loss figures), and a foreword by Robert Wise.

Projections of War
by Thomas Doherty
Columbia University Press, paper, 374 pps., $16

Nobody disliked movies about World War II more than the GIs involved in that monstrous conflict. They hated the flag-waving, the inaccuracies of soundstage warfare, the heroic officers and homesick enlisted men (most notably harmonica-playing Texans and baseball-deprived Brooklynites), the chorus girls carrying guns and singing about marching into Berlin, and the "we've got a big job to do" endings. Of course, as Doherty points out, these pictures weren't made to entertain military personnel, but rather to shape the thinking of the American public. He quotes a GI in Sicily: "I think Warner Bros. produces a better war all-around."

Uncle Sam made a lot of requests of the film industry: depict the Germans and Japanese as monsters, but make Stalin look good; emphasize the glory in fighting for a worthy cause; show the importance of sacrifices on the "home front," etc. These themes were worked into comedies, Westerns, musicals, thrillers, serials — every possible genre of entertainment film.

This book covers a lot of territory in considerable detail — the mainstream theatrical films, the battle documentaries, and the pictures that actually were aimed at the GIs: training films. Many famed directors and cinematographers were involved in such pictures. While it's well known that John Ford made some of the Navy's best combat films, such as *The Battle of Midway,* Doherty notes that he also inspired many a GI nightmare with the infamous *Sex Hygiene.* Incidentally, the best-known training film character was Private Snafu, created by Tex Avery's animation unit at Warner Bros. and voiced by Mel Blanc.



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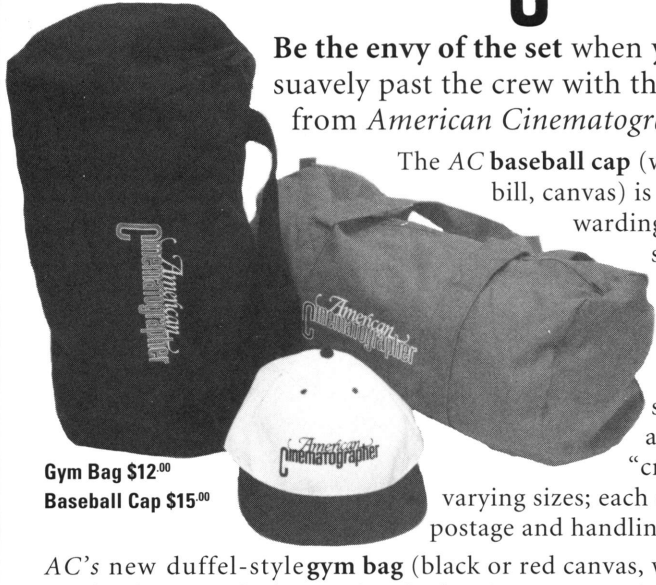

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Strangers in Hollywood
by Hans J. Wollstein
Scarecrow, 420 pps., $49.50

Of the millions of immigrants who have contributed the heritage of their homelands to the richness of the New World, few attracted greater attention than the Scandinavian actors who made their mark in the American film industry prior to 1939. Some of the names resonate even now: Greta Garbo, Jean Hersholt, Warner Oland, Sonja Henie, Nils Asther, Anna Q. Nilssen, Seena Owen, Lars Hanson. These successes, along with 52 other players whose flirtations with fame were brief or whose roles were less conspicuous, are chronicled in this, the 43rd edition in the Scarecrow Filmmakers Series. (The period covered in the book ends before the arrival of such later luminaries as Ingrid Bergman, Signe Hasso and Max von Sydow.)

The author, an actor from Denmark, provides a lot of information about most of his subjects, although a few are so obscure as to defy research. For the lover of old movies, the real kick of the book is the opportunity to learn something about the many small-parts players who provided production value and memorable moments in so many pictures, most of whose faces are more familiar than their names: the enigmatic Otto Matieson, master of slinking villainy; pug-nosed Kit Guard, initially a featured comedian and later a serial heavy; and angular Torben Meyer, master eccentric.

Here, too, are some glamorous actresses who flirted with stardom in America but never made it: Greta Grandstedt, who went the whole route from glamour girl to character actress without ever getting a decent break; and others such as Gwili Andre, Osa Massen, Sigrid Gurie, Diana Allen and Ann Forrest. Heavy accents dashed the careers of many notable Scandinavians when talking pictures arrived; this fate also befell Greta Nissen, star of the silent version of *Hell's Angels,* whose scenes were replayed for sound by Jean Harlow.

The book is neatly assembled and well-researched, although less reliance upon *New York Times* reviews could have given a somewhat more All-American view of these performers. ☙

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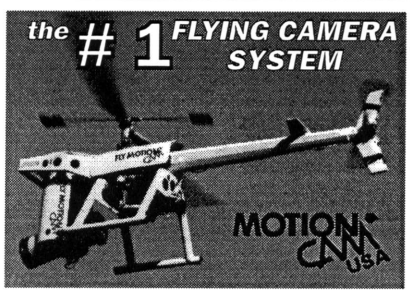

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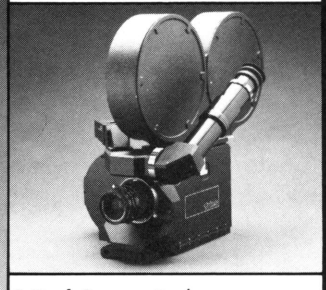
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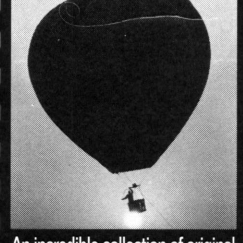
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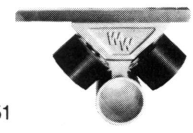

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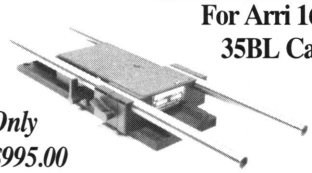
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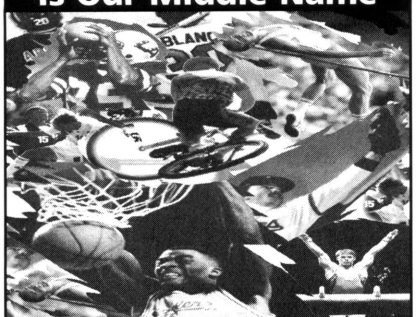

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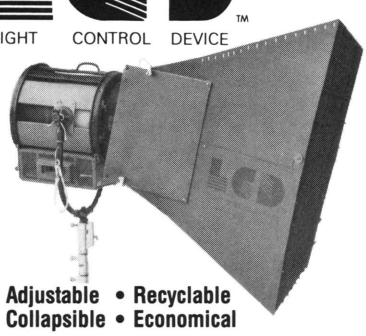

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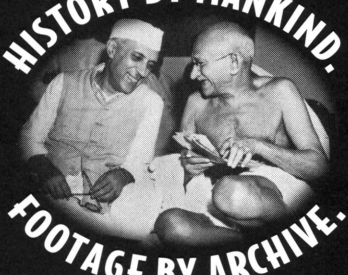

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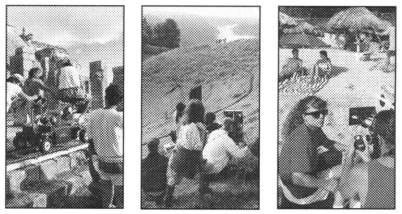

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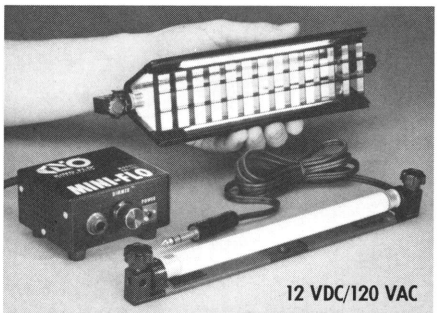

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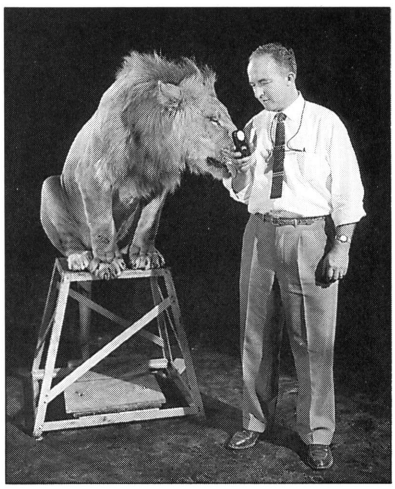
In Memoriam



Mark Davis, ASC, lionizes Leo, MGM's famous mascot, circa 1948.

Mark H. Davis, ASC, veteran visual effects cinematographer and artist, died on November 24, 1994 after a long illness. He was 87, and had been a member of the ASC since 1942.

Born in Troy, Idaho, on July 21, 1907, Davis came to Los Angeles in 1928 and landed a job in a warehouse. Two years later he was married and found a better-paying job ($49.50 per week) in the special effects department at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He worked as assistant cameraman to process and matte cinematographer Thomas E. Tutwiler, ASC, and also assisted the department head, matte painter Warren Newcombe.

Davis became an expert matte painter and scenic artist as well as being heavily involved in projection process, matte photography, Dunning Process and miniature effects on many of the studio's "Golden Age" classics. These include *Tarzan and His Mate, Tugboat Annie, Queen Christina, Dancing Lady, Hollywood Party, Bombshell, The Prizefighter and the Lady, Meet the Baron, The Cat and the Fiddle, Going Hollywood, The Great Waltz* and *Marie Antoinette.* He was also one of the designers of the studio's projection process system and invented the title-making equipment used at MGM for many years. Another invention was a special movie camera bought by the president of Technicolor.

Graduating to operative cameraman, Davis continued his association with Newcombe in making the celebrated "Newcombe shots" which added production value to so many MGM productions. One of these was *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), which was among the earliest Technicolor pictures to make extensive use of matte photography. Other pictures during this period were *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Smilin' Through, Blossoms in the Dust, Mrs. Miniver, Tortilla Flat, Random Harvest* and *Boom Town.* John Arnold, ASC, head of the camera department, promoted Davis to director of photography in 1942, while he was working on both *Keeper of the Flame* and *Lassie Come Home.* For the latter, Davis made some of the first matte shots in Eastman Monopack, which was essentially 35mm Kodachrome.

Davis also did a great deal of aerial cinematography, flying often with Paul Mantz. During World War II the Navy borrowed him from MGM to supervise aerial photography.

Davis remained at MGM until 1956, when he left to freelance. Although he never hired an agent, his versatility kept him in constant demand for theatrical features and filmed television shows at Warner Bros., Universal, Columbia, 20th Century Fox, Desilu and others. An associate said that Davis' schedule made it necessary for him to turn down jobs when he needed time off. Among his features during this period were John Wayne's *The Alamo,* Michael Todd's *Around the World in 80 Days* and *PT 109.* His TV credits include *Alcoa Theatre, Cheyenne, Maverick, Sugarfoot, 77 Sunset Strip, Hawaiian Eye, Bourbon Street Beat, The Roaring Twenties, Lawman* and *Broncho.*

Davis retired in 1973. During his career he had made more than 3,000 matte shots and worked on at least 470 feature films plus hundreds of television programs and commercials.

His wife of 62 years died in 1992. He is survived by three sons, Paul, Glen and David L., and four grandchildren.

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From the Clubhouse

ASC Honorary Member Burton "Bud" Stone has announced his retirement as president of Hollywood's DeLuxe Laboratories and Toronto's Film House, the North American film companies owned by the Rank Organisation. Stone will now play a consulting role in the management of the company and will continue working with the film community and industry, as well as film schools and students, on behalf of DeLuxe Laboratories.

Stone was born in Englewood, New Jersey and grew up in the film industry. His father, Jim Stone, designed one of the first modern film labs for Consolidated Film Industries in Fort Lee, New Jersey and was chief engineer of that facility. The younger Stone was the bat boy on the CFI baseball team at age 10, and during his teens spent summers working at the labs as a can boy.

He served in the Navy from 1945 to 1947 and graduated from Florida Southern College in 1951. That same year he started working as an assistant editor at CFI, then held a number of sales and marketing management positions at CFI and Movielab in New York from 1953 to 1963. In 1963 he founded a small lab which he managed until 1968 when, after a series of mergers and acquisitions, it became Precision Film Laboratories. He served as president of the company until 1976. He moved to California in 1977 and has been at the helm of DeLuxe Laboratories since 1978.

DeLuxe Laboratories, founded in 1915, is one of the oldest existing companies in the film industry, and during Stone's tenure has become one of the largest and most respected film labs in the world. Stone guided the company through an expansion program in Los Angeles which culminated this year with the opening of a film plant at the facility, a $20 million investment for the company.

"It's not just a job for Bud," says Rank chief operating officer Cyril Drabinsky, who will succeed Stone as president of DeLuxe. "He believes we are privileged to work in this industry, and that we have an obligation to help make it a better place. Bud instilled that philosophy at DeLuxe, and he made it an important part of our corporate culture. That policy will continue, and Bud will play a key role in this area."

Among Stone's volunteer activities has been his work with the ASC, for which he has served as chairman of the Outstanding Achievement Awards committee for the past six years.

"It isn't an honorary title," says ASC president Victor Kemper. "Bud works with us to organize and manage a large committee of volunteers, representing many sectors of the industry. They are basically responsible for making the event happen. This activity has flourished under Bud's leadership. We believe he has made a substantial contribution to enhancing the stature of this art form."

Last year, the ASC made Stone an honorary member, a distinction given to only 23 people over the past 75 years, including Thomas Edison and George Eastman.

"I remember wanting to follow in my father's footsteps when I was just a boy," Stone says. "How many people get to see their dreams come true? I've been very lucky. I was blessed with a progressive management at DeLuxe, which has been supportive of my goals. There have been times when I have wondered how I would handle this day, when I announced that a very important part of my life was ending. Now I know that it's really just a new beginning."

Stone's successor, born and raised in Toronto, studied at the University of Toronto and received a law degree at the University of Windsor. Drabinsky was called to the bar in 1982, at which time he was also employed as director of business affairs for Cineplex Odeon Films. In 1986 he left his position as a senior vice president at that company to join Rank as senior vice president of Film House in Toronto. He was named president of Film House in March of 1989, and since 1992 has been chief operating officer of the two companies.

The Right to Sign Ourselves as "Authors of Cinematography"

by Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC

It is obviously a very simple matter to establish to whom the rights, and, more specifically, to whom the moral and substantial rights of an individual's "original work" belong. When it comes to cinema, inasmuch as [each film] is a joint original work, it becomes much more difficult to determine the ownership of the above rights. The producer himself has always been the logical owner of the substantial rights, but deciding to whom the moral rights legally belong has never been an easy task.

Just like any author who expresses himself in each artistic work, the "author of cinematography" (i.e. the cinematographer) not only contributes all of his technical and professional experience to the creation of the images on which he collaborates, but also influences their composition in his own personal way with his particular artistic taste and with his highly individual creativity. He is the alpha and the omega of the photographic process, and with his technical and creative conceptualization, realization and communication of the image, he is equally as responsible as the director for its creation.

It is not in fact the cinematographer's job to simply reduce objects with the aid of a movie camera, but to realize, in a particular way, a succession of images which have been reflected upon and structured according to a specific concept, via a creative process called photography.

If one holds to the interpretation which sees the director (defined by all as the principal author of a cinematographic work) as the sole controlling and creative force behind the camera, one must therefore acknowledge that the director of photography. . . ought to be considered a co-author of the cinematographic work and consequently an author in his particular field of cinematography. By writing with light, the cinematographer leaves his personal and original mark on a film, so much so that every director, producer, critic and moviegoer does not hesitate in defining his contribution to that same film as "creative."

Writing in light is not merely a form of individual handwriting that is a part of a figurative concept, but also a personal concept of life represented by individual artistic expression. It is undoubtedly an expression of our inner self, a visualization of our own spirit by means of an original cinematographic work; it is a journey I began some time ago by first exploring the realm in which darkness and light are separate — by immersing myself in the same light to discover the meanings, symbols, physiology, ages, drama, feelings and emotions of each color. It is a journey I am continuing — even while setting down these thoughts — by investigating and meditating upon the equilibrium of the elements.

> The director of photography ought to be considered an author in his particular field.

Audiovisual works fall into the category of composed works which cannot and should not be protected in part. The term "audiovisual" can be divided into two basic areas of creativity but, unfortunately, the area pertaining to vision still does not enjoy full recognition as regards moral rights, in that authorship has not yet been established for the light. The photography of a cinematographic work is an "insubstantial" property which, from the very moment it is conceived, labored upon and realized, is governed by a copyright which "belongs" to us even though it has not yet been legally recognized. The cinematographer makes a specific creative contribution during the preparation stage (when he establishes his photographic concept), during the all-important shooting stage (when, besides realizing his own creative concept, he also recognizes those of all the other authors of the film) and during the postproduction stage (when, as well as determining the light and color tones of the cinematography by means of the answer print, he becomes responsible for unifying the creative desires and the work of all the co-authors, mainly of the director). In giving his approval to this final version of the film, he becomes the sole technician responsible for the quality of the print when viewed on the screen by moviegoers throughout the world. He controls the projection standards and makes himself the guarantor of the cinemagoer's right to enjoy a cinematographic work in the way in which it was conceived and realized by its authors. The cinematographer's work is completed before the moviegoer's eyes on the same screen where the word "cinema" is fully defined. In reality, it is only when the means of expression known as cinema is realized with a language of photographic images — and follows a logical argument with a beginning, a middle and an end — that it can truly call itself by that name. It is only when the various elements that combine to create a cinematographic work are in equilibrium. . . that they can fully be called a film. It is for these reasons that I believe we all have the right, whether it has been assigned to us legally or not, to sign our works as authors of photography in cinema, a qualification that is rightfully ours.

This article was excerpted from a program book published for the CamerImage Film Festival, which took place in Torun, Poland from November 26 through December 3. Storaro was honored with the festival's Lifetime Achievement Award.

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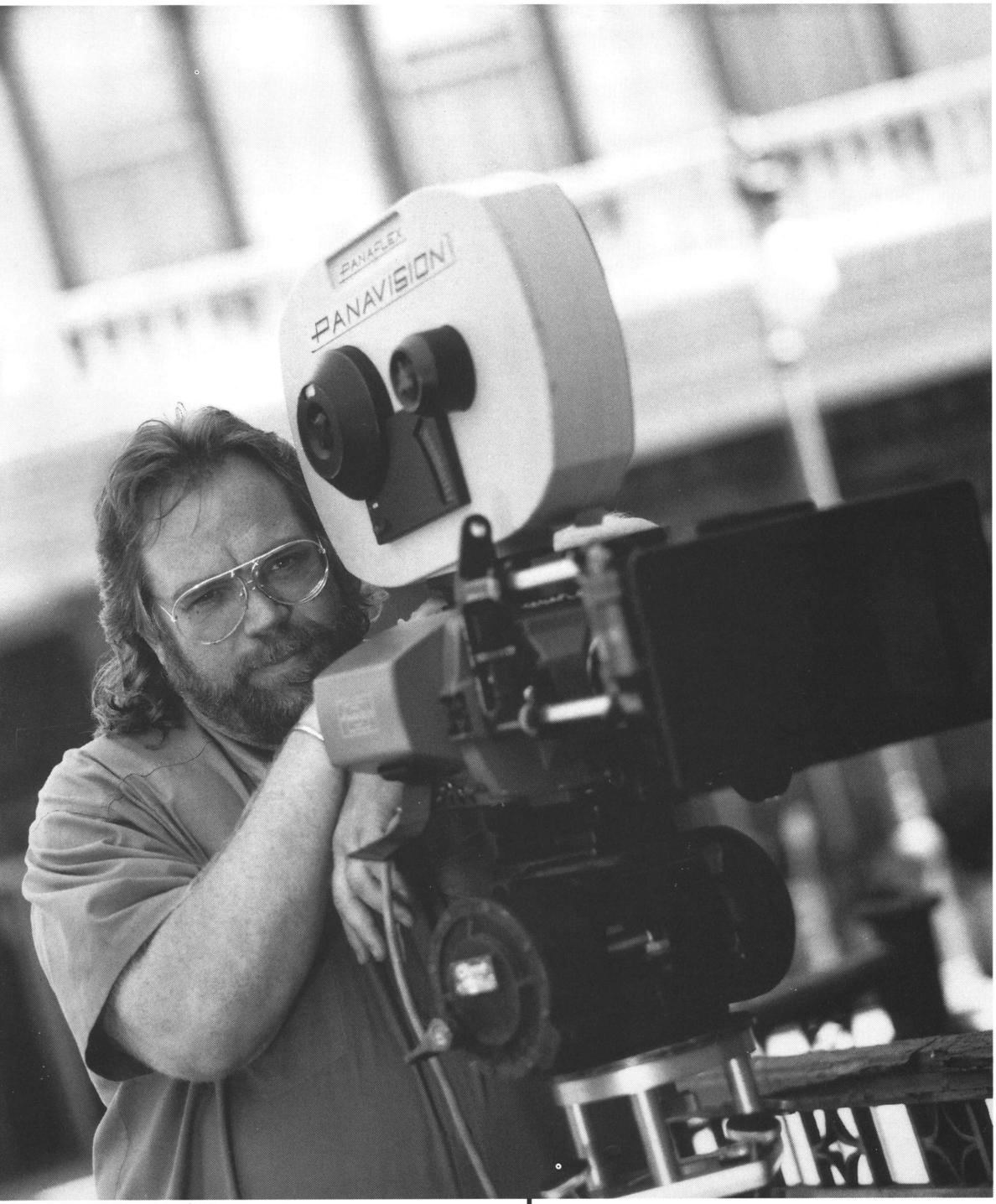

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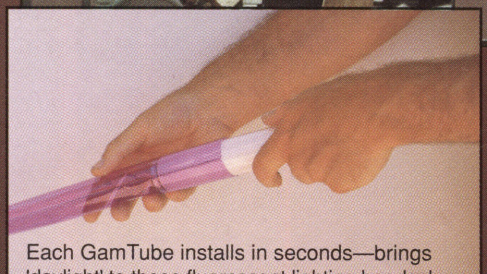

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